

ANCIENT HISTORY
OF
EGYPT,
ASSYRIA,
AND
BABYLONIA.

BY
ELIZABETH M. SEWELL,

AUTHOR OF "AMY BERNARD" AND OTHER TALES, "A FIRST HISTORY OF ROME,"
"A FIRST HISTORY OF GREECE," "HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH,"
"FOUNTAIN READER," ETC.

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"IMITATION RESOLVED," ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE chief authorities consulted for the following History are Rawlinson's Herodotus and Bampton Lectures; Sir Gardner Wilkinson's Ancient and Modern Egyptians; Sharpe's History of Egypt; Stanley's Sinai and Palestine; Rollin's Ancient History; Dr. Schmitz's Ancient History; Early Ancient History, by Henry Menzies; and Layard's Nineveh and Babylon.

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EUROPE.			ASIA.			AFRICA.		
Classes.	Subdivisions or Groups.	Modern Countries.	Classes.	Ancient Countries.	Modern Countries.	Classes.	Ancient Countries.	Modern Countries.
Taphetic, or Indo-European.	Celtic	{ Wales, Ireland, Scotland, France.	Semitic, Taphetic, or Indo-European.	{ Pelagic { Lydia, Lydia, Phrygia.	{ Part of Turkey in Asia, Anatolia, Armenia.	Semitic.	{ Carthage, Western Africa.	{ Tripoli, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis.
	Teutonic	{ Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Feroe, England, Germany, part of Holland.		{ Arian { Persia, Media, Ariana, Upper Indus.	{ Persia, Panjab, Hindustan.			
	Thracian.	Turkey in Europe.		{ Palestine, Syria (part of), Assyria, Chaldea.	{ Holy Land, Part of Turkey in Asia.			
	Lithuanian	{ Prussia, parts of Lithuania, Livonia.						
	Slavonic	{ Russia, Poland, Bohemia, Part of Hungary Silesia.						
Scandin.	Pelagic	{ Greece, Italy.	Hamitic.	{ Philistia, Sidon, Tyre, Hittites, Southern Arabia, Babylonia, Susiana.	{ Part of Syria, Arabia, Part of Turkey in Asia.	Hamitic.	{ Egypt, Ethiopia.	{ Egypt, Abyssinia.
		{ Sicily, Spain, part of						
Turanian.		{ Finland, Lapland.	Turanian.	{ Northern Asia	{ Mongolia, Thibet, Manchouria, Tartary, Part of China, Hill country of India. Russia in Asia.			
		{ Turkey (part of) Hungary (part of) Islands of the Archipelago.						

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ANCIENT HISTORY.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

ANCIENT HISTORY—which may be considered generally to mean History before the Christian *Æra*—is, in many respects a subject so confused, and giving rise therefore to so much conjecture, that any attempt to define its origin must involve what will, at first sight, appear to be insurmountable difficulties. But the researches which have been made, and are still being carried on, into the history of the races, or, as it is scientifically termed, the ethnology of mankind, is becoming so much a part of history, that without some knowledge of its early and universally admitted facts, the events consequent upon them must be more or less imperfectly understood.

That the world was peopled by the descendants of Noah,—is a truth which few are prepared to controvert;—but of the manner in which that re-peopling was effected, and especially of the distribution of mankind after the dispersion of Babel, we have no record except the general outline given in the Book of Genesis. Opinions upon the subject can therefore, for the most part, be formed only by an inquiry into the varieties of speech, or comparative Philology. The races who speak the same language, or languages nearly resembling each other, may be considered with certainty to be derived from the same stock; for amidst all the changes of time, the conquests

and emigrations of tribes, the rise and fall of empires, and the vast influence of civilization, language has, in its principal features, remained clear and distinct. The history of nations may be traced in the words by which they express their meaning, almost as plainly as in the monuments which remain to tell the events in which they have taken part. Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Norman-French form the groundwork of the language of England at the present day,—and if no history of those several conquests and settlements had been written, yet would the fact of their having taken place remain imbedded in the very words we daily utter,—and be to the ethnologist a proof of the events so convincing as scarcely to require any further testimony.

The first fact which meets us in our inquiry into the ethnology of the human race as discoverable from language is, that the inhabitants of Western Asia—which was the part of the world first peopled, were a Tatar or Turanian population, whose language was so simple, so absolutely devoid of literature, and so constantly changing, that Turanian speech may be called rather a *stage*, than a form of language. It seems indeed to be the earliest mould into which human discourse naturally throws itself, and this vagueness prevents us from being *certain* that all the races whose language resembles the Turanian in general character and genius ~~were~~ actually descended from one common stock. The utmost that can be said is that, in the most ancient times of which we possess any knowledge, the form of speech called the Turanian seems, without doubt, to have been generally prevalent from the Caucasus to the Indian Ocean, and from the shores of the Mediterranean to the mouths of the Ganges, and that the same kind of language, exhibiting itself however in various dialects, was in use over the whole Eastern hemisphere. This

primitive form of language has remained crystallised as it were amongst uncivilised hordes to the present day. It is the language of four-fifths of Asia, and of many of the remoter parts of Europe. It is spoken by the Finns, and Lapps, the Mongols, Thibetians, Tatars, the hill-tribes of India, and all the various races which wander over the vast steppes of Northern Asia and Eastern Europe, and it can be traced in the language of the Turks and Hungarians, and of many nations in the Eastern Archipelago.

This primitive Turanian language appears by degrees to have developed itself into two forms of speech—much more accurate and grammatical,—the Hamitic and the Semitic,—or the language of the descendants of Ham, and that of the descendants of Shem. It is impossible to say at what exact time the Hamitic, which is the earlier of the two languages, originated. Probably its rise preceded the invention of letters, and there are reasons for assigning the origination of the change to Egypt, which we know to have been peopled by the children of Ham; from thence it would naturally spread to the dwellers in other lands, who were of kindred race. In one direction it appears to have been carried to Ethiopia, Southern Arabia, Babylonia, Susiana, and the adjoining coast;—in the other it spread to Philistia, Sidon, Tyre, and the country of the Hittites.

The gradual developement of the Hamitic into the Semitic tongue is said to be discoverable in the records of Chaldaea and Babylonia. It appears to have attained a certain degree of completeness about the beginning of the 20th century B. C. That such changes are slow we can ascertain from our own knowledge. The formation of the English language as it is at present used has been a work carried on for nearly a thousand years. Anglo-Saxon and English are two distinct languages, but no

one can mark the precise moment when the one was exchanged for the other. The change of the Hamitic language of Chaldaea into Semitic must have been connected with the invasions and intermixtures of different tribes, and at this period, B. C. 2000, we find that the Hamitic inhabitants of Mesopotamia were superseded by a new, though kindred, race—who founded what is strictly speaking the Chaldean empire, and who, there is reason to suppose, may be considered to have belonged to the family of Shem. But however this may be, it is certain that the distinction between the two races becomes more clear after this time, and that the characteristics of the Semitic language may be traced in that of Chaldaea, Assyria, Syria, Palestine, Sicily, Spain, Carthage and Western Africa.

What is especially remarkable of the Semitic family is the small size of the district which it covers, being a space scarcely more than 1600 miles in length and 800 in breadth, and its wonderful capacity for originating new and strange ideas, and thus affecting the spiritual condition of mankind. Semitic races have influenced far more than any others the mental progress of the world, and all the great changes in religious belief have been brought about by their instrumentality.

The third great division of language, the Indo-European, or language of the children of Japhet, is in its origin involved in complete obscurity. Whether it was from the beginning a form of language distinct from the Scythic or Turanian, or whether, like Semitism, it was a development of that original tongue, cannot be determined by tracing its rise in records,—for of these there are none. But it is in accordance both with reason and revelation to consider it a development, since we read of a time when "the whole earth was of one language."

Armenia appears to have been the place from whence

this form of speech arose, and from thence three great divisions of the people by whom it was spoken appear to have migrated when the narrowness of their territory compelled them to seek a new abode.

One division probably crossed the Caucasus and settled partly in the steppes of Upper Asia, but chiefly in Northern and Central Europe. We hear of them in history as the Celtic, Teutonic, Lithuanian, Thracian, Slavonic, and other less well-known tribes.

A second division of tribes appears to have wandered westward, and to have settled themselves in the high table land of Asia Minor, possessing themselves also of the whole country above Taurus, and in some instances penetrating to the south of it. These were the Phrygians, Lydians, Lycians, &c. Thence it would seem they proceeded onwards, crossed the Hellespont, peopled the islands of the Archipelago, and became the primitive colonists of Greece and Italy, known to us as the Pelasgi.

The third division is generally known as the Arian. The tribes of which it was composed appear to have turned eastward, and fixed their home in the mountains of Afghanistan, and upon the course of the Upper Indus. The early history of these tribes is for many ages an absolute blank, but rather more than 1500 years *n. c.*, they became straitened for room, and began to send out colonies eastward and westward. Advancing along the rivers of the Punjab, they engaged in constant wars with the Primitive Turanian inhabitants, gradually driving them into the mountains, where their descendants still remain, speaking Turanian dialects. Then descending into the plains of Hindostan, the Arians became the ancestors of the modern Hindoos.

Other Arian colonies turning in a different direction, settled themselves in Persia and Media and the adjacent

countries lying to the north-east, in all instances subduing the original Scythic or Turanian population who had previously possessed themselves of those lands. It is to this Arian immigration that Persia owes its ancient name of Iran.

The characteristics of the Indo-European race are not so easily defined as those of the Semitic, since to it belong a multitude of nations of different degrees of civilisation. But the more prominent among its branches possess greater clearness and calmness of mind than the Semites. They also exhibit great genius for organization, literature, and arts, in the last of which the Semites have always been far behind them. They have, in fact, developed every thing that is great and noble in man to such a degree as to outstrip all other races.



HISTORY OF EGYPT.

CHAPTER I.

COLONIZATION OF EGYPT.

IF looking back upon the knowledge acquired in childhood, there are few perhaps who will not remember that the country to which—next to the land of their birth—their attention was first strongly directed, was Egypt. In the Bible, it is brought before us as a kingdom much earlier than Palestine, and the story of Joseph and his brethren, the miseries of the Israelitish bondage, and the deliverance of the chosen people by Moses, have given it a character so peculiar, so connected with the sacred and miraculous, that in many minds the Egypt of the Bible, and the Egypt of profane history, stand apart as countries totally distinct—the one belonging to earth—the other to scenes and persons connected with the awful invisible world. And it is true that a mysterious importance has always been attached to the land of Egypt. It is the type of the bondage of sin. The deliverance of the Israelites by Moses prefigured the deliverance of Christians by Christ. But it must be remembered that the meaning of this deliverance was not clearly seen and acknowledged at the time when it was effected. Both Jews and Egyptians acted and suffered, blindly. They worked for God's purposes, but, notwithstanding the miraculous interposition, which must have brought vividly before them the sense of the Divine power, they had no perception of what those purposes were. It was not until hundreds of years had gone by that mankind were able to look back, and read in the marvellous histories of the days of old the decrees of

that over-ruling Providence, which "ordereth all things from the beginning."

Well, therefore, may we study the features of that early period of the world's life, and, as far as lies in our power, bring out into reality the history of the land in which occurred events so mixed up with sacred truth that they have an allegorical as well as a literal meaning. For if the Egyptians had in this wonderful way two histories, one upon the surface, open to the knowledge of all men, the other deep hidden beneath, and open only to the Eye of God, so, we may be sure, have the nations of the earth at this present day. The changes of governments, the actions of kings and rulers, are tending to some great though secret purpose of God's Providence; and if we would wish to impress ourselves with this truth we may go back in imagination to the events connected with that land from which the veil has been taken, and as we recognize, the passions, interests, and pursuits, which are still common to mankind, ask ourselves whether, if, in the generations of old, men, were thus blind to the import of their own actions, whilst engrossed in the things of the world, we may not be blind also? It may be that such a question will lead us to deal reverently with the events which are passing before us, and teach us a lesson of faith and patience, more valuable with reference to Eternity, than any amount of mere historical knowledge can be with reference to Time.

The date to which the history of all nations must necessarily go back is that of the Deluge,—generally reckoned to have taken place in the year B. C. 2348. When Noah left the ark, the earth lay outspread before him,—once more to be repopled; and from his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japhet, the great divisions of the present race of mankind trace their descent.

It appears to have been soon after the Deluge that the

descendants of Ham made their way from Asia—most probably through Palestine, the Desert, and the Isthmus of Suez—to the land enclosed on each side by mountains, and watered by the river Nile, which forms what is now called Egypt. It was but a small territory not more than one-sixth part of the size of England. The long narrow valley was no where more than eleven miles in breadth, and terminated in a deep bay, which, as time went on, became filled up by the earthy deposit brought down by the river. An island was then formed in what had once been the sea, the river at its head dividing itself into several branches. In after years this portion of land was termed the Delta, from its resemblance to the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet. Whether the Delta, or Lower Egypt, as it is now termed, was in existence when the first colonists entered the country, we have no certain means of knowing, but the valley of the river, or Upper Egypt, must always have offered advantages sufficient to attract colonists. A river is naturally a source of prosperity to a country. It affords an easy mode of communication between places distant from each other, and gives the ready means of fertilising the land; and the peculiarities of the Nile are such as materially to assist the labours of the husbandman. The source of the mighty river lies far beyond the narrow valley of Egypt. From the mountains of Abyssinia its waters first issue forth, increasing in power as they pass through Nubia, until they enter Egypt with the rush of the cataract, and from thenceforth, flowing onwards in a "broad, calm, lake-like stream," which gathers no strength from tributary rivers, but pursues its course alone and untroubled to the sea.

But the ordinary volume of water in the river would not alone be sufficient to fertilise the country. It is necessary that the great stream should overflow its banks, and year by year this phenomenon occurs. The rains,

which in Central Africa fall annually between April and September, swell the body of water in the Nile; and about the beginning of June the river overspreads the low lands. The inundation lasts for about three months, and though it may often cause ruin at the time, it leaves behind a fresh layer of rich brown silt especially suited to vegetation, and producing crops three or four times a year. It is to this cause that Egypt owes its prosperity. The aspect of the country, except for its fertility, is for the most part unattractive. The Delta is a boundless plain, unbroken by rocks or hills, and in the time of the inundation it looks like an immense marsh, in the midst of which little villages, towns, and plantations, rise just above the water. In Upper Egypt the hills are low, and the palms and sycamores, which are the principal trees, are thinly scattered. The plants and birds are those which especially belong to the water. The crocodile haunts the shores of the river, and the wolf and the hyena prowl in the desert near; whilst the swarms of gnats and flies bred in the mud, as the inundations subside, are so great as to be a scourge to the inhabitants.

The heat of the climate must always have been great, but the early colonists of Egypt could have had but a slight temptation to inactivity. The waters rushed upon them from the mountains, and the winds from the west blew the sands of the desert upon their lands. Constant activity was requisite to protect their habitations, and as the Nile could not of itself cover the whole country, it was necessary to cut numberless canals in order to convey the water to all parts. The fertile soil of Modern Egypt is thus, in a great degree, owing to the industry of its ancient inhabitants.

The portion of the valley of the Nile, from the range of granite hills which form the cataract of Syene to where the great river receives its first tributary stream, the

Astaboras, formed the Kingdom of Ethiopia, which for many years may be considered to have been part of Egypt. Like that country it was bounded on both sides by the desert, but, being farther to the south, the climate was even more scorching, and the animals were those of a more tropical country, for there the camelopard browsed on the branches of tall trees, and the ostrich laid its eggs in the sand to be hatched, and when disturbed sailed away before the wind. Still farther to the south, two hundred miles above the Astaboras, was the island of Meroë, formed by a division of the Nile, and sometimes subject to Ethiopia. It was a plain within the district of the tropical rains, in the land of acacia and ebony trees,—a country too moist for the palm trees of Egypt—but where the hippopotamus waded in the reedy fens and trampled down the fields of rice and corn, and not far from the forests which sheltered herds of elephants.

So much as regards the soil and climate of Ancient Egypt may be gathered from the present aspect of the country and the traces yet remaining of the early labours of its inhabitants. We further learn, after careful examination and inquiry, that the people of Ancient Egypt consisted chiefly of three tribes. The first, the Copts, who were to be found in the greatest number in Upper Egypt, and whose skulls, as discovered from their embalmed bodies, were shaped like those of the modern Nubians; the second, a race of men more resembling the Europeans; and the third, an Arab race. The first two tribes were the upper order of the whole country, the third were the labourers; but the inhabitants of Lower Egypt were in process of time mixed with a large number of Phœnicians from the neighbouring parts of Syria. At what period laws and government were established amongst these tribes is a question which carries us into a maze of obscure traditions.

The first mention of Egypt in the Bible is, according to the common calculation, about 300 years after the Deluge; it is then spoken of as a kingdom. From that time until the departure of the Israelites, more than 430 years must have elapsed. Who ruled in Egypt during that long period? How did it become such a mighty power? By what steps did the first colonists who entered the country, probably in alarm and confusion after the dispersion of Babel, become the subjects of a settled government; and who were the kings--the ancestors of those Pharaohs whose names are so familiar to us in the Bible? There may be two answers given to these questions. One which tells us that the early history of Egypt is so uncertain that we cannot pretend to know anything about it, and shall therefore only waste our time by inquiring into it; whilst the other brings before us a string of uncouth names and absurd stories, yet mixed up with assertions which we cannot but believe to contain some portion of truth. We may, if we will, reject this legendary history entirely, but it is better perhaps to search a little into it; for the few facts which are admitted as probably true will give us a foundation for the future and well authenticated history, and the stories connected with them will be found useful from the allusions made to them by various writers.

The Bible informs us that Ham, the son of Noah, who was cursed for irreverence to his father, had four children, "Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan." (Genesis x. 6.) The names occur amongst a list of many others, which few, perhaps, except persons interested in ancient researches, have ever thought it necessary to read. But the name of the second son meets us again, after the lapse of about 600 years from the date of the Deluge, in the short but touching account of the burial of Jacob. When Joseph and the Egyptians carried the body of the

Patriarch to its final resting place in Canaan, the inhabitants of the land, as they saw the mourning in "the threshing floor of Atad which is beyond Jordan," gave a new appellation to the scene of so much sorrow, and, unable to distinguish the grief of the Hebrew family of Joseph from that of their followers, they called it Abel-Mizraim—the mourning of the Egyptians. Mizraim also means the two Miers or provinces of Upper or Lower Egypt; but the fact that the son of Ham was called Mizraim seems to shew that any appellation given to the country was derived from him. That the Egyptians were the descendants of Ham is still more clearly stated in the 78th Psalm, where it is said that God "smote all the first born in Egypt, the most principal and mightiest in the dwellings of Ham." It is Mizraim, who is by some supposed to be the same with Menes, universally allowed to have been the first king of Egypt. Marvellous stories are related of the works carried on by this monarch for the good of his country. He is said to have diverted the course of the river Nile, drying up the old channel, and compelling the river, by the means of dykes and embankments, to flow through the centre of the valley. The former bed of the river was then made into firm land, and upon it Menes built the city of Memphis, near the spot where Grand Cairo now stands. Memphis, however, was not the oldest city in Egypt. The original capital was This, in Upper Egypt, which is reputed to have been the birthplace of Menes; but of this city no monuments remain. Undertakings of this magnitude, begun so soon after the Deluge, may, at first sight, appear very astonishing; but we must remember that the children of Noah were not savage barbarians who had every thing to learn, and whose descendants could only become civilised in the course of long ages. They had dwelt amongst persons who were probably as advanced

in science and knowledge as they were in wickedness. The 2000 years which elapsed from the Creation to the Flood, must have been years of constant and rapid advancement in human acquirements; for the long lives of the Antediluvians must have enabled them to pursue their discoveries with a certainty of success of which we can form no idea. The world did not, as it were, begin life again after the Deluge; and when Menes became the ruler of Egypt his subjects probably possessed a knowledge of the arts of civilization fully sufficient to carry out the projects of their Sovereign. That Menes himself was no mere barbarian chief is shewn by the fact that in after ages one of the reproaches brought against him was that of having introduced a taste for luxury by accustoming his people to the use of coaches, tables and carpets.

Menes is sometimes said to have instituted the religion of the Egyptians; but this cannot be a correct expression. Human beings do not institute religion, they only corrupt it. If the early inhabitants of Egypt retained—as doubtless they did—the tradition of the Flood, and of the dispersion of Babel, they must have known also that they were bound to worship the One True God, and they could never have fallen at once into the wretched idolatry which was afterwards the disgrace of the country. Whatever religious ceremonies were instituted by the first king would almost certainly have had some reference to the pure worship offered by Noah to the Almighty Lord of Heaven and Earth, and it would therefore be a mistake to introduce in the reign of Menes an account of the religion of the Egyptians, although it is most likely that even then the wickedness of men had caused them to mix up fable with truth, and that the errors which afterwards led the people to such a height of folly had already begun.

CHAPTER II.

PYRAMID PERIOD—ABOUT B.C. 2450—2031.

AFTER the death of Menes, who is said to have been killed by a hippopotamus, the Egyptian history becomes for some centuries a mass of names and fables. The little which is known of it is chiefly gathered from two Greek writers, Herodotus and Diodorus, and from the slight remains of the work of Manetho, an Egyptian priest, who, about 250 years before the birth of Christ, undertook to write the history of his own country in Greek. Manetho was able to obtain access to the records kept by the priests and could understand and explain them, and his work, if it had come down to us, would have been very valuable; but unfortunately the whole has been lost, with the exception of a few extracts, evidently copied very carelessly, and containing lists of an immense number of kings, many of whom were contemporaneous monarchs, reigning at the same time in different parts of the country. Manetho gives a series of thirty dynasties of kings. Another source of information has also within the present century been opened to us by the reading of the hieroglyphics or symbols with which many of the Egyptian monuments are completely covered. These symbols consist of a great variety of figures, such as plants, animals, men, working utensils, &c., together with devices which seem to have no special meaning. For very many years attempts were made to decipher them, but without success; and the term hieroglyphic was

at length applied to anything the meaning of which was unknown. But when Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt, he took with him several scientific men, whose sole object was to search into the history and curiosities of the country, and by their means a stone was discovered at the town of Rosetta, which gave a clue to the meaning of the hieroglyphics. This stone, which is now to be seen in the British Museum, contained three inscriptions, one in hieroglyphics, another in the letters then in use in the country, and a third in Greek. They belonged to the beginning of the second century before Christ, and were evidently different forms of the same meaning. The Greek and Egyptian letters were read easily, and by the aid of the Greek especially hints were gained as to the principle on which hieroglyphical writing was formed. Several learned men, both French and English, pursued the study with great interest, and at length the hieroglyphics were satisfactorily deciphered. But the information obtained from them is less than was hoped for. The hieroglyphics are found to be for the most part only pompous inscriptions in honor of the kings who founded different Egyptian monuments. They give us names and representations of warlike exploits, but little else.

This early period of Egyptian history is, however, as remarkable for the remains of its buildings as it is deficient in historical certainty. The Pyramids, which are still reckoned amongst the wonders of the world, were undoubtedly built when Kings and Queens, whose names are now mere matters of curious inquiry, reigned in This and Memphis, and sought by erecting funeral monuments to perpetuate after their death the glory which attended them through life. For the Pyramids are tombs. Immense as their size is, their interior is almost a solid mass, containing only a few narrow passages and chambers. But a sarcophagus, or stone-tomb, has

been found in every one of them, clearly shewing the purpose for which they were built.

Cheops, or Suphis, was the king who is About 2450. supposed to have built the first or Great Pyramid, and the old legends state that he was a monarch remarkable for his wickedness as well as his power. Rejecting the worship of the gods, he shut up all the temples, and ordered the Egyptians to labour only for himself. Some were sent to procure stones from the quarries in the distant mountains; others were appointed to transport them in vessels across the Nile, and to drag them still further to their place of destination on the elevated plains of Libya. The people worked, it is said, in parties of a hundred thousand men at a time, each set labouring for three months. Ten years were spent in forming the road along which the stones were dragged, and in making preparations for the building, and twenty years more were employed in the erection of the monument itself. The height of the Great Pyramid is now 460 feet,—when perfect it must have been about 480, nearly the same as that of the highest steeples in Europe. Originally it covered an area of 571,536 square feet, or somewhat more than the area of Lincoln's Inn Fields. The outer sides were covered with polished stones of different colours; but these coatings have been taken away by the Arabs, and at present not a vestige of ornament is left. The position of the Pyramids is very remarkable. They are placed so exactly facing the four cardinal points that the variation of the compass may be ascertained from them. This accuracy would imply that the Egyptians of that age possessed some astronomical knowledge, and were accustomed to careful observations. It has been thought that the size of a Pyramid shews the duration of a monarch's reign, but this circumstance is doubtful. It is certain, however, that additions to the

original building could easily be made from time to time, for the Pyramids were built in steps, the faces of which were nearly perpendicular, the triangular space, formed by the projection of the lower step being afterwards filled in. In this manner, as the steps were widened, the size of the building could be increased. The Great Pyramid contains within it a hall, two chambers², a hole supposed to have been a well, and two air passages to give ventilation; but these when taken together do not form one sixteen-hundredth part of the entire area, the remainder of which is perfectly solid.

The quantity of stone which has been employed in the erection is almost beyond imagination, yet the sepulchre within, three feet deep and broad and a little more than six feet in length, is all that was required to hold the mortal remains of the monarch who was buried there. In the time of Herodotus there was an inscription on the Pyramid in Egyptian characters which said that 1,000 talents of silver, or about £200,000, were expended in garlic, leeks, onions, and other vegetables for the workmen. How much more must have been required for tools, bread and clothes! It can be no matter of surprise that the reign of Suphis is described as having been a time of great hardship for his people, since such immense and unproductive labours were required of them. But his death seems to have brought them no relief. Sen-Suphis, his brother, who is supposed to have previously shared the government, succeeded him. The second chamber in the Great Pyramid appears to have been intended for the bones of Sen-Suphis. Herodotus calls this king, Chephren, and says that he was the son, not the brother, of Cheops, or Suphis. He states also, that during his reign the temples were still shut, and the Egyptians employed upon another Pyramid, whilst the country generally was visited by great calamities, and he adds that when at length Chephren

died, his memory with that of Cheops was so detested, that many centuries afterwards the Egyptians were unwilling even to mention their names. According to the preceding tradition, the body of one of these kings was not permitted to enter the Pyramid constructed for it, but was torn in pieces by the people.

Mycerinus, or Mencheres, another son of Cheops, is said to have succeeded Chephren.

The old legends declare of him that he was a prince very unlike his father; that he re-opened the temples, restored the sacrifices, permitted the people to return to their employments, and ruled them justly and mercifully. Yet happiness did not follow him. He was visited by a grievous sorrow in the death of his daughter, his only child, and in the extremity of his affliction, being desirous of giving some public token of his love, he resolved to bury her in a more costly manner than usual. With this view he caused a hollow wooden image of a cow to be made, and having covered it with gold he placed within it the body of his deceased daughter, which no doubt, according to the custom of the Egyptians, was embalmed, so that it might not moulder away. The process of embalming consisted of filling the body with myrrh, cinnamon, and all kinds of spices, and then swathing it in rolls of linen, which were glued together with a thin gum, and afterwards coated over with delicious perfumes. As many as a thousand yards of linen have been found on these embalmed bodies. By such precautions the entire figure of the body and the features of the face were perfectly preserved. In ordinary cases, the body when embalmed was given to the relations, who shut it up in a kind of open chest fitted exactly to the size of the corpse, and then placed the chest upright against the wall, either in a sepulchre, or very frequently in their houses: The most expensive mode of embalming cost

nearly £250, the second £90, and the third was very cheap. Animals, held sacred, were also embalmed, but very few mummies of children have been discovered. The golden cow, said to have contained the body of the daughter of Mycerinus, was not hidden from sight, for Herodotus relates that when he visited Egypt it was still kept in a richly furnished chamber of the royal palace in the city of Saïs. It was partly hidden by purple cloth, but the head and neck, covered with very thick gold, were left exposed. A golden orb, to represent the sun, was placed between the horns—the cow lying down with the limbs under the body. In size it was equal to a large living cow. Sweet perfumes were burnt near it, and a lamp was kept burning by it during the night. Every year the cow was carried out of the chamber; for, according to the tradition of the priests, the princess, when dying, had entreated her father to permit her to see the sun once in the course of every twelve months.

After the death of his daughter, Mycerinus was visited with a second calamity. An oracle reached him from the town of Buto, which said—"Six years only shalt thou live upon the earth, and in the seventh thou shalt end thy days." Mycerinus, indignant, sent an angry message to the oracle, reproaching the god with injustice. "My father and uncle," he said "though they shut up the temples, took no thought of the gods, and destroyed multitudes of men, nevertheless enjoyed a long life; I, who am pious, am to die so soon!" There came in reply a second message from the oracle—"For this very reason is thy life brought so quickly to a close; thou hast not done as it behoved thee. Egypt was fated to suffer affliction one hundred and fifty years; the two Kings who preceded thee upon the throne understood this—thou hast not understood it." Mycerinus, when this answer

reached him, perceiving that his doom was fixed, had lamps prepared, which he lighted always at event-time, and then feasting and enjoying himself unceasingly both day and night, and visiting all the places in which he thought amusement could be found, he strove to prove the oracle false, and by turning nights into days, to live twelve years in the space of six.

But death came to him at last, and he was buried in his grand sepulchre, the third Pyramid, which, although much inferior in size to that of his father, was far more beautiful, on account of the granite that coated it. It was opened in A.D. 1837, but it had been ransacked before, and all that was found within it was the broken cover of the king's coffin, the lid of which is now in the British Museum. Mycerinus is said to have been succeeded by Nitocris, a Queen who possessed great beauty and spirit. The legends declare that the Egyptians, having killed the brother of Nitocris, delivered the kingdom to her, and that in order to avenge him she devised a cunning scheme, by which she destroyed a vast number of persons. Having constructed a spacious underground chamber, on pretence of inaugurating it she invited to a banquet those of the Egyptians whom she knew to have had the chief share in the murder of her brother, and then suddenly, whilst they were feasting, she contrived, by means of a secret duct or large pipe, to let in the river upon them, so that they were all killed. Having done this, she threw herself into an apartment full of ashes, in order to escape the vengeance to which she would otherwise have been exposed.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGION OF THE EGYPTIANS.

WHATEVER may have been the origin of the legend of Mycerinus, it is certain that the choice of a cow for the sepulchre of his daughter must have been connected with the Egyptian idolatry, which inculcated a great degree of reverence for animals—the cow being especially sacred. Not that the Egyptians were without any belief of a more spiritual kind; there is no doubt that in common with the generality of mankind they retained the idea of one Supreme Lord of All, but they also worshipped the attributes of this Almighty God under various forms. Thus one deity was the creative power, another the divine wisdom, another represented truth and justice; others embodied the principles of prudence, temperance, fortitude, &c. In this manner the idea of the Divinity was multiplied to an indefinite extent.

There were also numerous physical deities in the Egyptian Pantheon, such as earth, heaven, the sun and moon, and others like them, revered for the benefits they conferred on man. The usual mode of representing the gods was under the human form; but many created things, especially animals and insects, were thought to partake of the Divine essence, and to be emblems of the divinities; and, though not actually deities, they called forth feelings of respect, which the ignorant would not readily distinguish from actual worship. It is doubtful if the Egyptians really represented, under any form, their idea of the One Supreme Being. Like the Jews, they

probably regarded His Name with such profound reverence that it was never uttered, whilst He was not supposed to be approachable, except under the form of some deified attribute.

As the Greeks and Romans divided their gods into different classes or grades, so also did the Egyptians. Their great gods were eight in number, one of whom generally formed, in conjunction with other two, a triad or trinity, which was worshipped by a particular city or district with peculiar veneration. They had a confused notion of the necessity of a manifestation of the Deity upon earth, evidenced in the worship of Osiris, who, with Isis, his sister and wife, were the only gods adored by all the Egyptians alike. Osiris was called the manifestor of good, and was declared to have appeared on earth to benefit mankind. After having performed the duties he had come to fulfil, it was believed that he fell a sacrifice to Typho, the evil principle, and rose again to a new life, being made the judge of mankind in a future state. Typho was said to have been overcome by the influence of Osiris after he left the world, and the blessings of eternal happiness were obtained by the dead, in the name of this god, when they had passed their final ordeal and been absolved from sin.

The resemblance between the story of Osiris, and the great facts of Christianity, is so remarkable, that some persons are disposed to think that the Egyptians, being aware of the promises of the real Saviour, had anticipated that event, recording it as though it had already happened.

The visible representation of Osiris was the sacred bull Apis, in which the soul of the god was supposed to dwell. This animal was always black, with a triangular white spot on the forehead, and on the back a figure similar to that of an eagle. He had also two kinds of

hair in his tail, and a lump under his tongue in the form of a beetle.

When the Apis died, the priests sought for another bull having the required marks, for into this animal the soul of Osiris was supposed to pass. Being found, they conveyed him to Memphis, where he had a splendid residence, with extensive walks and courts for his amusement. The festival in honour of Apis lasted seven days, on which occasion a large concourse of people assembled at Memphis, and the priests led the sacred bull in solemn procession, all persons coming forward from their houses to welcome him. The Egyptians not only paid divine honour to the Apis, but, considering him the living image of Osiris, they consulted him as an oracle, and drew from his movements good or bad omens. They were in the habit of offering him food with the hand—if he took it, the omen was considered favourable, if he refused, it was deemed unfavourable. He had also two stables, to both of which he had free access; and it was supposed that benefits to Egypt were foreboded if of his own accord he entered one, and the reverse if he entered the other.

The attention paid to Apis, and the care bestowed upon his health, were such, that even the water he drank was taken from a particular well set apart for his use—and it was forbidden to give him the water of the Nile, in consequence of its being found to have a peculiarly fattening property. "For the Egyptians," says Plutarch, the Greek biographer, "endeavoured to prevent fatness as well in Apis as in themselves, always studious that their bodies might sit as light about their souls as possible, in order that their mortal part might not oppress and weigh down the more divine and immortal."

The Sacred Bull was only allowed to live twenty-five years, and when he had reached this age he was drowned with much ceremony. His body was then embalmed,

and a great funeral procession took place at Memphis, when his coffin, placed on a sledge, was followed by the priests in dresses of leopard skin, worn on all occasions of pomp and solemnity. When the Apis died a natural death, his funeral was celebrated on such an extravagant scale, that those who had the office of taking charge of him were often ruined by the heavy expenses entailed upon them.

Isis, who was even more frequently worshipped in the temples of Egypt than Osiris, has, from the number of attributes given her, been confounded with many other deities, and has obtained the title of *Myrionymus*, or "with ten thousand names." She was the goddess of the earth, and was supposed to have taught mankind to cultivate wheat and barley, which were carried about in the processions at her festival.

The grief of Isis for the death of Osiris was celebrated by mysterious religious ceremonies, and the title of royal wife and sister, derived from her having married her brother, was given to her. This fabulous notion is supposed to have been the origin of a custom prevalent in Egypt from the earliest to the latest periods, which permitted brothers and sisters to marry, such an alliance being considered fortunate in consequence of the example set by Isis and Osiris.

Isis was often represented as a woman with horns, and the cow was considered sacred to her, although she was not supposed to dwell in any particular animal. The Egyptians, from reverence to Isis, shewed far more consideration for heifers than for other cattle. Oxen were offered in sacrifice, but it was not permitted to immolate heifers; when they died their bodies were thrown into the river. Bulls were buried in the suburbs of the cities, with one horn, or both, above ground to mark the spot. There the bodies remained till they were decomposed,

and from time to time a boat was despatched from a little island in the Delta, with persons in it who went from one town to another to dig up the bones of the bulls, and take them to a particular spot where they were buried.

Amun, or Amun-re, was another of the great gods of Egypt. He was especially worshipped at Thebes, and held the same place in the Egyptian mythology which Jupiter did in that of the Greeks. In the inscriptions at Thebes, Amun has generally the title of "King of the gods." A celebrated temple and oracle in the Lybian desert—called by the Greeks the oracle of Jupiter Ammon—appears to have been connected with the worship of this god. There is indeed a great resemblance between the mythology of all heathen nations; and the gods of one country being frequently adopted by those of another, the result is an almost inextricable confusion. Another source of perplexity in Egyptian mythology is to be found in the fact that one god was often represented with the emblems of another united to his own. As each deity was only an attribute of the One Great God, it was natural to ascribe to him various characters, according to the several offices he was supposed to perform. Osiris was the Goodness of the Deity; Phthah was His Creative power; but Osiris might be represented with the emblems of Phthah without making any change in his character, since both Goodness and Creative power belonged to the Great Lord of All, from whom both Osiris and Phthah were supposed to derive their origin. Again, Amun was the "King of the gods;" Re, another deity, was the "Sun." When Amun was called Amun-re, he was described as the intellectual Sun, or the enlightener of the mind.

It is evident indeed that what at first sight appears to have been the gross absurdity of the Egyptian religion, was in reality the result of speculations on the nature

and attributes of the One Eternal God, mixed up with traditions handed down from Noah; for we find amongst the mythological legends allusions not only to the Trinity and the promised manifestation of God upon earth, but to the creation, the deluge, the ark, &c.—traditions which are indeed common to almost all nations, and evidently point to some common origin. The distance between the pure worship of God, as derived from Noah, and the miserable superstitions to which the Egyptians were after a time enslaved was no doubt very vast, but it may easily be accounted for when we consider that in questions of religious belief any departure, however slight, from the truth, tends at last to produce gross error. Men do not see this, because they do not live long enough to observe the effect of their own doctrines, but in the course of ages it becomes clearly evident; and when we examine the origin of the religion of the Egyptians, their delusive idolatry can be traced as certainly and naturally to early mistaken speculations regarding the nature of the True God, as the sins of children can, in the generality of instances, be traced to the wrong instruction and example of parents and teachers.

The Egyptians, as it has been shewn, began by separating the Attributes of God from His Essential Being, and worshipping them under some visible emblem, as in a measure distinct deities. They also regarded the works of God as tokens of His Power, which no doubt they are; and on the same false principle of separating the Attributes of God from Himself, the Sun and Moon were made inferior deities. A similar idea suggested reverence to other created things, especially those which tended to benefit the human race. They were considered sacred to the gods, and therefore entitled to reverence—reverence became outward homage, and outward homage became real adoration, and at length all ideas of a spiri-

tual nature were lost in the honour paid to the creatures who had from various causes been associated with invisible deities, or who were venerated for their usefulness to mankind. Not only were the larger animals—the ox and the cow—objects of worship, but the dog, the wolf, the cat, the crocodile, the hawk, the ibis or stork, and even insects and reptiles, received divine honours; amongst the latter may particularly be mentioned the ichneumon, which destroys the eggs of the crocodile. The care of these sacred animals devolved, by the laws of the country, on certain persons, who were treated with especial honour because of their sacred office. The expense incurred by these curators or guardians was immense, for not only were necessary provisions procured for the animals, but imaginary luxuries, which they could neither understand nor enjoy. Warm baths were prepared for some of them; they were anointed with choice ointments, and perfumed with fragrant scents. Rich carpets and ornamental furniture were provided for them, and every care was taken to consult their natural habits. Meat was cut in pieces and thrown to the hawks, who were invited by well-known cries to their repast. Cats and ichneumons were fed on bread soaked in milk, and with certain kinds of fish caught on purpose for them. Whenever any sacred animal died it was wrapped up in linen and carried to the embalmer, attended by a procession of persons of both sexes, beating their breasts in token of grief. Peculiar sepulchres were frequently set apart for certain species, but in large populous places the mummies were deposited in the same common repository. Mummies of birds, rats, shrew-mice, toads, snakes, beetles and flies have been found at Thebes in one tomb. The respect paid to the sacred animals was not confined to the funeral ceremonies: the mourners shaved their eyebrows on the death of a cat, and their whole body for

the loss of a dog ; and all the provisions which happened to be in the house at the time of the death of these animals were looked upon as unlawful food, and were forbidden to be applied to any use. So remarkable indeed was the feeling of veneration in which the sacred creatures were held, that in times of severe famine, when hunger compelled the people to eat human flesh, no one ever ventured to touch the meat set apart for them. To destroy a sacred animal voluntarily subjected the offender to the penalty of death ; but if any person, even unintentionally, killed an ibis or a cat, it infallibly cost him his life, the multitude immediately collecting and tearing him in pieces, often without any form of trial. The same honours were not indeed paid to the same animals universally. It often happened that the inhabitants of one town or province worshipped as gods creatures which their neighbours held in abomination, and this was the occasion of serious quarrels. The crocodile, the ibis and the cat were, however, everywhere venerated, and it is said that no instance was ever known of one of these creatures being killed by an Egyptian. Great, however, as was the error and absurdity of the Egyptians in figuring their deities under the forms of animals, their religion was in one respect better than that of the Greeks. The objects of their worship were not put on a level with earthly beings by having the ordinary offices and employments of men attributed to them. In the eyes of the Egyptians the creatures whom they honoured had always the dignity of gods, and they sinned rather in elevating animals and emblems to the rank of deities than in bringing down their deities to the level of mankind.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KINGS OF THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD, AND THE
HYKSOS INVASION.

As it is impossible to give any thing approaching to a continuous history of the early kings of Egypt, so it is useless to attempt any settled system of chronology, the utmost certainty which can be obtained being only a probable approach to the truth. The Sovereigns whose names have been hitherto mentioned as belonging to what may be called the Pyramid period—since no less than sixty-seven Pyramids of this age are known to have existed, although no traces of them are left—are found in the 4th Dynasty, mentioned by Manetho, and reigned at Memphis. Contemporaneous with them were kings reigning at This, Thebes, and other cities. But a few centuries afterwards we find mention of a powerful prince who ruled the whole of Egypt from the Delta to the Second Cataract. His name and title are inscribed on a colonnade in the temple at Karaak in Lower Egypt. He is called “the Lord of the Upper and Lower Country;” and the sculptures on the walls represent him as receiving different tribes who appear to be Africans. Some of them are prisoners, and others are, apparently, doing him homage. This King, Osirtasen I., and his immediate successors, must have lived about the time of the Patriarchs, when “Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there,” and when Joseph was sold by the Midianites to Potiphar the captain of the King’s guard.

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The civilization of the country must by that time have advanced to an extent which we can with difficulty picture to ourselves.

On the eastern bank of the Nile there are excavations made in the solid rock, known by the name of the Grottos or Tombs of Beni Hassan. Within are paintings, representing the employment of the ancient Egyptians, and the mode in which they carried on their manufactures, and exhibiting their feats in hunting, wrestling and dancing. These tombs are amongst the oldest monuments in Egypt. They are certainly believed to date as far back as Joseph, and may even be assigned, with great probability, to a period before him. From them we learn that the Egyptians in those days understood the making of glass, earthenware, and porcelain, the cleaning of cloth and stuffs, the spinning and weaving of flax. Cooked meat, and fowls skilfully carved, with fruit served up in various dishes, and wine made in presses, and preserved in jars, are portrayed on the walls, and monkeys are represented as being trained to save labour by assisting in gathering fruit. Cattle are depicted as tended by decrepid herdsmen, a circumstance which serves to shew in what low estimation this class of persons was held by the Egyptians. Even at an earlier date there are evidences of the same habits of life, and a knowledge of the same arts. It is certain that about two centuries after Menes the blocks of stone used in building the Pyramids were put together with a precision which has never been surpassed, whilst in none of the early tombs are there any appearances of a primitive mode of life.

The successors of Osirtasen I., whose names, chiefly Osirtasen and Ammenemes, have been found recorded on pillars and monuments, were, there can be no doubt, powerful Kings. They extended their rule beyond Egypt and Ethiopia, and Osirtasen III., who was held in pecu-

liar veneration, must have been remarkable for more than his conquests, since he is distinguished by the epithet of "Good." Two of the most remarkable public works of Egypt, the Lake Mæris and the Labyrinth, are attributed to the greatness as well as the mechanical skill of Ammenemes III., who was remarkable also for the attention he paid to the level of the Nile—a matter of such importance to the fertility of Egypt, that records have in every age been made of the height to which the water has from time to time risen. In the present day this record is kept by a Nilometer in the neighbourhood of Cairo. It consists of a square well or chamber, having in the centre a pillar marked in degrees for the purpose of ascertaining the daily rise of the river. The height which the water has reached is proclaimed every morning during the inundation, by four criers, to each of whom a particular portion of the city is assigned. The first Nilometer is said to have been erected at Memphis as far back as the time of the Pharaohs: others were afterwards raised in various places.

On the rocks above the Second Cataract, on the borders of Ethiopia, are some curious records of the rise of the Nile during the reign of Ammenemes III., and the Kings his immediate successors, which shew that the river in that place formerly rose 26 feet higher than it does at present. The alteration was occasioned by the giving way of some rocks, and was very disastrous for Ethiopia, since it left the plains of that country far above the reach of the annual flood.

The object of the King who constructed Lake Mæris and the canal which connected it with the Nile, was to regulate the inundation of the river, and assist in irrigating the neighbouring country; but the mode in which this purpose was accomplished is not fully ascertained. Herodotus says that both the lake and the

canal were artificial; but there is reason to believe that the former must have been in part natural. Ancient writers are agreed that the lake was at least 360 miles in circumference, and 300 feet deep in the centre. Two Pyramids, crowned with colossal statues are stated to have been erected in the middle of the lake, and to have risen above the surface of the water to the height of 300 feet. The annual produce of the fishery of Lake Mæris amounted at one period to more than £47,000 sterling, and it is said that this great revenue formed part of the pin-money of the Queens of Egypt.

The Labyrinth, attributed likewise to Ammenemes III., appears to have been a collection of palaces in which the national records were deposited. It was built beyond Lake Mæris, near Arsinoë, or the City of Crocodiles. Herodotus, who himself saw the Labyrinth after it had been completed and ornamented by subsequent Egyptian kings, was more struck with it than with many other buildings which must have been standing at the same time, and which it would seem to us must have been equally grand. He says of it: "I visited this place, and found it to surpass description; for if all the walls and other great works of the Greeks could be put together in one, they would not equal, either for labour or expense, this Labyrinth.—It has twelve courts, all of them roofed, with gates exactly opposite one another, six looking to the north and six to the south. A single wall surrounds the entire building. There are two different sorts of chambers throughout—half under ground, half above ground, the latter built upon the former. The whole number of these chambers is 3000—1500 of each kind. The upper chamber I myself passed through and saw, and what I say concerning them is from my own observation. Of the underground chambers I can speak only from report; for the keepers of the buildings could not

he got to shew them, since they contained (as they said) the sepulchres of the kings who built the Labyrinth, and also those of the sacred crocodiles. Thus it is from hearsay only that I can speak of the lower chamber. The upper chambers, however, I saw with my own eyes, and found them to excel all other human productions; for the passages through the houses, and the varied windings of the paths across the courts, excited in me infinite admiration, as I passed from the courts into the chambers, and from the chambers into the colonnades, and from the colonnades into fresh houses, and again from these into courts unseen before. The roof was throughout of stone like the walls, and the walls were carved all over with figures; every court was surrounded with a colonnade, which was built of white stones, exquisitely fitted together. At the corner of the Labyrinth stands a Pyramid 40 fathoms (or 300 feet) high, with large figures engraved on it, which is entered by a subterranean passage."

The reign of Ammenemes III. brings us to a period of Egyptian history which has caused, perhaps, more discussion than any other—the invasion and conquest of the country by the Hyksos or shepherd kings—so named from two Egyptian words, *hyk*, signifying "king" or "ruler," and *sos*, signifying "shepherd." It appears that the Hyksos were an Arab race, who made long and constant attacks on the Egyptians, and conquered them by degrees. The Kings, or Pharaohs, reigning at Thebes, were able to withstand them for some time, and it was not till after the reign of Ammenemes III. that the Thebaid, or province of Thebes, fell into their hands. The dispossessed sovereigns are believed to have taken refuge in Ethiopia.

The following is the account given by Manetho of this invasion:—

"We had once, he says, a king called Timæos, under whom, from some cause unknown to me, the Deity was unfavourable to us. And there came unexpectedly from the eastern parts a race of men of obscure extraction, who confidently invaded the country, and easily got possession of it by force, without a battle. Having subdued those who commanded in it, they proceeded savagely to burn the cities and raze the temples of the gods, inhumanly treating all the natives, murdering some of them, and carrying the wives and children of others into slavery. In the end they also established one of themselves, whose name was Salatis, as a king; and he took up his abode in Memphis, exacting tribute from both the Upper and Lower country, and leaving garrisons in the most suitable places."

Manetho adds that the Egyptians, under their native kings, subsequently revolted against the shepherds, and carried on a long and formidable war with them, until at length, after besieging them in their chief stronghold, a treaty was made, by which the invaders and usurpers, to the number of 240,000, agreed to abandon Egypt, and accordingly withdrew across the deserts into Syria.

The occupation of Egypt by the Hyksos was probably owing, not to a mere love of conquest, but to the desire of maintaining a right they claimed to the throne, through marriages with the family of the Pharaohs; or to an invitation from some one of the inferior Egyptian princes who had been dispossessed of his government. Either of these reasons would account for their having obtained possession of part of Lower Egypt "without a battle." Nor was their rule like that of a people who had entered the country for the sake of conquest. They indeed treated the religion of the Egyptians with disrespect, but it was because it was different from their own; and it certainly appears that,

whilst reigning in Lower Egypt, they were at one time on friendly terms with some of the kings of other parts of the country. The power of Egypt increased rather than diminished under their government, which lasted between five and six hundred years, but the fact of their usurpation, added to their proud and cruel conduct, rendered them hateful to the people, who ever after continued to hold their name in abhorrence.

The point which it would be most interesting to determine with regard to the invasion of the Hyksos, is its precise date, but here unfortunately we have no clue to guide us satisfactorily. The shepherd kings left behind them neither monuments nor sepulchres, and the Greek writers make no allusion to their conquest.

Whether they had subdued Egypt before the lifetime of Joseph, or had at that period only commenced their attacks, is a question which still remains undecided, though there appears to be an allusion to them in the statement that "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." (Genesis xvi. 34.) In the absence of certain records it is impossible to identify exactly the kings mentioned in Scripture with those whose names have been transmitted to us through other sources. Pharaoh was for many centuries a common appellation for all the Egyptian monarchs, and, when we seek to connect the history of the country with that of the Israelites, we can attain only to probable conjecture. There is something very disappointing in this uncertainty. Scarcely any character in Scripture interests us more than Joseph; we naturally long to collect every fact in profane history which may connect itself with his life; and, amongst the antiquities of Egypt, perhaps few would interest the ordinary traveller more than the solitary obelisk, four thousand years old, standing on the site of the ancient On, or Heliopolis, which must have

looked down upon the marriage of the young Hebrew, when he took to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potipharah, the priest of the great Temple of the Sun.*

The details of the history of Joseph are too well known to require repetition. In connection with the history of Egypt he is remarkable, not only as being the cause of the settlement of the Jews in that country, but as influencing materially the condition of the people. During the famine in Lower Egypt, Joseph bought up the whole land for the king. Every man sold his field; and the whole soil, except that which belonged to the priests, became the property of the Crown. Joseph then made a new division of the land. He allotted out the estates to the husbandmen for cultivation, and gave them seed to plant, requiring as a rent that one-fifth part of the crop should be given to the royal treasury. The land was in fact held by what is now known in Asia as the *ryot tenure*. This rent was in the place of all direct taxes; and, except the duties upon manufactures and upon the exports and imports, it does not seem that any other tax was laid upon the Egyptians till the country was conquered by the Persians.

When the family of Joseph arrived in Egypt, a tract of high land was assigned them, situated between the Valley of the Nile and the Desert, and in the neighbourhood of Heliopolis. From the word "geshe," or upper lands, it perhaps derived its name Goshen. It was neither moistened by rain from heaven nor by the overflow of the Nile, but required to be watered laboriously by means of trenches, hand-pumps and buckets. The land of Goshen had about the same boundaries as the Heliopolite Nome.

* Stanley's Sinai and Palestine.

CHAPTER V.

EGYPT AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE HYKSOS.

B. C. 1520. AMES, or Amosis, a Theban king (probably B. C. 1520), was the monarch who, with the aid of the Ethiopians, appears to have finally delivered his country from the yoke of the shepherds, and united it under one king. An inscription, discovered in some stone quarries, records the fact that in the twenty-second year of his reign stones had been cut there by his order for temples at Memphis and Thebes. This proves that Upper Egypt had been reconquered; and another inscription, which speaks of a captain of the fleet, who, in the reign of Amosis, visited Tunis or Zoan, then the capital of Lower Egypt, is an evidence that the *whole* of the country must at that time have been free. It is supposed that, whilst preparing to expel the shepherds, Amosis took refuge at the court of an Ethiopian princess, whom he afterwards married. This black queen was evidently held in high estimation. From the monuments it appears that she was one of the holy women devoted to the service of the god of Thebes, and she even had the office, usually held only by priests, of pouring out libations to Amun. Amosis had also another queen,—a white woman and an Egyptian,—but she held a position inferior to that of the Ethiopian princess. Monuments representing both these queens are now in the British Museum.

It is remarkable that mention is first made of the horse on the monuments belonging to the reign of Amosis.

The word by which it is designated is Semitic, whereas the language of the Egyptians was Hamitic. This shews that the animal came from Asia, and it has been supposed that it was first brought into the country by the shepherd kings. If so, they may have been in a great degree indebted for the success of their invasion to their horses and chariots. It is certain that there is no indication of the horse either at the tombs about the Pyramids or at the grottoes of Beni Hassan, and if the shepherds conferred a boon so great as that of the introduction of this animal on the Egyptians, they may be looked upon as their benefactors, and the causes of their future power. For after the re-establishment of the native dynasty the greatness of Egypt increased rapidly and extensively. Conquest followed conquest, and the wonderful temples and obelisks erected by successive monarchs, and bearing the records of their reigns, are still standing, though in ruins, to attest their exploits and give a clue to their history. At this period Upper Egypt appears to have been pre-eminent in greatness, whilst Lower Egypt was usually held by its monarchs as a province.

The names of Amunoph I., and Thotmes the First, the Second, and the Third, are found inscribed upon the monuments of Upper Egypt as the successors of Amosis.

All were more or less conquerors, and all have left magnificent buildings to testify to their taste in art as well as their greatness in war; but Thotmes III. was B. C. 1463. the most distinguished in both these respects. He extended his arms far into Asia, from which he received a large tribute. Elephants, bears, horses, camel-opards, apes, ostrich-feathers, rare woods, gold and silver vases, ebony, ivory, gold-dust, ingots of gold, and rings are recorded as being amongst the treasures and curiosi-

ties brought from conquered lands both in Asia and Africa; but the inhabitants appear still to have been left in a measure independent. The tribute was an acknowledgment of defeat, and this it seems was all that was required. A woman shares the glory of the reign of Thotmes III.,—and indeed of that of his predecessor Thotmes II. Queen Amun-nou-hot occupied the throne jointly with the latter, and on the accession of Thotmes III., whose half sister it appears she was, she still retained the office of regent. She seems to have enjoyed far greater consideration than either of the two kings. Not only are monuments raised in her name, but she is represented dressed as a man, and alone presenting offerings to the gods. During her lifetime Thotmes III. never obtained the chief authority, and such was the hatred he bore her, that after her death he ordered her name to be erased from her monuments, and his own to be sculptured in its stead. But this was not always done with the care required to conceal the alterations, and it is a singular instance of the record of a personal spite, transmitted through long ages, and brought to light after having been to human knowledge utterly buried and forgotten, when we find on the monuments of this period such inscriptions as the following: "King Thotmes *she* has made this work for *her* father Amun."

Two obelisks, bearing the names of Thotmes III. and his successor Thotmes IV., are still to be seen in Europe—one which is now standing at Constantinople, and the other which has been erected in the Piazza before the Church of St. John Lateran at Rome. More bricks have been found bearing the name of Thotmes III. than that of any other Egyptian king.

Another monarch of this period, Amunoph III., is best known from his celebrated musical statue, which is stated

to have uttered, soon after sunrise, a sound resembling the breaking of a harp-string or the striking of a metallic ring. It is one of two colossal figures, each above fifty feet high. They sit, side by side, in front of a small temple built by Amunoph in the plain opposite Thebes, "casting, as it has been said, every morning their long shadows on the white Libyan hills, and having their feet washed, autumn after autumn, by the inundations of the Nile." * The priests, who no doubt contrived the sound of the statue, were artful enough to allow the supposed deity to fail occasionally in his accustomed habit, and some persons were consequently disappointed on their first visit, and obliged to return another morning to satisfy their curiosity. The statue is generally known as the statue of Meranoh. Amunoph III. began the great Temple of Thebes, now called the Temple of Luxor, and which was formerly joined to that of Karnac by an avenue of sphinxes half a mile in length. His wars and victories in the south of Egypt are recorded in a boastful manner on the pedestal of one of his statues, more than thirty negro prisoners, with thick lips and bushy hair, being represented standing with their arms tied behind, and each bearing the name of a conquered district of Ethiopia. The mode of recording these successes is characteristic. The inscription of the numbers is, of "living captives, 150 head; children, 110 head; negroes, 350 head," &c., as if they were scarcely considered to be human beings. The name of Amunoph III. is found above the second cataract oftener than that of any other Egyptian king.

Many kings might be mentioned as succeeding Amunoph III., but the enumeration of their names would be tedious and uninteresting. It will be sufficient to remark

* Sharpe's Egypt.

that about the beginning of the fourteenth century, B.C., traces are to be found of another dynasty of "stranger kings," who altered the religion of the country, introducing the worship of the Sun, and setting aside that of Amun, the great god of Thebes, and thus rendering themselves obnoxious to the people; but their rule lasted only a short time, and towards the close of the same century we meet with a monarch claiming descent from the old line of Theban, or Diospolite kings, and the head of a royal line who are proved from modern researches to have been amongst the most distinguished of the Egyptian sovereigns.

B. C. 1324. Remeses I. was no great conqueror himself, and is remarkable only as being the first of the family; but Sethos, or Osirei, his son, and Remeses II. his grandson, have left behind them records and monuments of their greatness, surpassing those of all their predecessors. In the reigns of these monarchs, Egyptian art may be considered to have attained its highest degree of excellence. The style and finish of the sculptures, and the wonderful engravings of the granite obelisks, on which the hieroglyphics are sometimes cut to the depth of three inches, are unequalled by the work of any other epoch; though it must at the same time be observed that Egyptian art, even in its most perfect form, never attained the ease and the perfect resemblance to nature which is to be found in that of Greece. In one respect, and perhaps only one, was the early Egyptian artist superior to the Greek. The Greek statues have truth, muscular action, grace, beauty, and strength. They exhibit pain, fear, love and a variety of passions. But none of them are equal to those of Egypt in impressing on the beholder the feelings of awe and reverence. The Egyptians had learned the superiority of rest over action in representing the sublime,

and the artist who desires to give religious dignity to his figures should study the quiet sitting Colossus of the reign of Amunoph III. In Michael Angelo's statues of Moses and Jeremiah we see how, in a similar manner, strength at rest was made use of to represent power and grandeur. The victories of Sethos, who extended his conquests to Palestine and Mesopotamia, and his personal valour in killing the enemy's chief with his own hand, are recorded on the exterior wall of the Great Hall of Karnak, and his tomb with its sarcophagus of oriental alabaster, in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes, is one of the grandest monuments in Egypt;—grand, but incomplete; for the reign and life of Sethos appear to have ended suddenly. An additional chamber for his monument had been ordered, but it was left imperfect, and the figures which were to ornament it were outlined but never sculptured.



CHAPTER VI.

REMÈSES II., OR SESOSTRIS.

B. C. 1311. REMÈSES II., the greatest of the Egyptian monarchs, had been associated with his father Sethos in many of his wars, and at that time distinguished himself; but he became still more remarkable afterwards. His power and grandeur have indeed taken possession, as it were, of nearly the whole of that period of Egyptian history, and being attributed by the Greeks to a monarch whom they named Sesostris—the story of his reign has been transmitted to us in a legendary form. The father of Sesostris is said to have had a remarkable dream before his son's birth, by which the child's future greatness was foretold. Being much impressed with it, he determined to do all in his power for the accomplishment of the prophecy, and accordingly assembled at his court all the male children who were born on the same day, for the purpose of training them as his son's companions. The education of the young prince, and that of his friends, was very severe. They were indeed provided with everything needful, but as they grew up, in order to inure them to hardships and manly exercises, they were forbidden to taste any food till they had run or walked a distance of eighteen miles. Equal care was taken to strengthen and cultivate their minds, and they were thus fitted for the difficulties they were to encounter in after life.

Sesostris, having ascended the throne, turned his attention to the proper government of his dominions, and having divided Egypt into thirty-six nomes or provinces, he appointed a governor over each. Then, collecting a vast army, he appointed the companions of his youth, to

the number of 1700, to the chief command, and prepared to put into execution the plans of conquest which he had formed. His brother Armais was left regent in his absence, with the command to respect and defend the queen, the royal family and the household. He was invested with supreme power, being only forbidden the use of the diadem.

The Egyptian legends relate marvellous stories of the conquests of Sesostris, declaring that he subdued nearly the whole of Asia, and even advanced into Europe; but during his absence he risked the loss of his own kingdom, which his brother had formed the design of seizing. Some accounts state that Armais actually took possession of the throne. Others say that on the return of Sesostris a great feast was given by the regent, in honour of the conqueror, to which Sesostris and various members of his family were invited. The house had been previously filled with combustibles which, by the command of Armais, were set on fire as soon as the king had retired to rest. Sesostris, roused from his sleep, perceived his own danger and that of his family. Only one means of escape suggested itself, and taking two of his sons he extended them over the burning mass, so as to form a bridge upon which the rest might step. By this terrible sacrifice he saved himself and the rest of his family.

Sesostris was no sooner delivered from the treacherous attempts of his brother, than he returned thanks to the gods for his escape, and raised marble statues of himself, his queen, and his children, in commemoration of it. Many splendid monuments were also erected by him in different parts of Egypt, as thank offerings for his victories. His prisoners of war were employed in these works, and also in others necessary for the good of the country—especially in digging more canals for the benefit of the people who resided at a distance from the river.

Sesostris is said to have divided the country into shares,

which he distributed equally amongst all his subjects, requiring them to pay a fixed rent for them; but if, in consequence of the inundations, any person lost a portion of his allotment, he was ordered to make known what had happened to the king, who then sent persons to inspect the land and see how much it had diminished, and the rent was lowered in proportion.

To his own people Sesostris is described as being always just and merciful; but to the princes whom he conquered he was proudly severe. When the kings and chiefs of the nations whom he had subdued came at stated times to pay their tribute and do him homage, he caused them to be harnessed to his chariot, four abreast, and in this way he entered his capital, or went to the temple, in triumph. But his own hour of humiliation came at last, though not by the hand of war. In his old age he was struck with blindness, and being unable to endure the affliction, and feeling himself no longer able to be useful to his people, he poisoned himself. This act was considered by the Egyptians far from unworthy of a good man. Both the priests and the people regarded it rather as becoming a hero admired by men and beloved by the gods, whose reward of eternal happiness Sesostris had hastened to enjoy.

Such is the history of the greatest of the Egyptian monarchs, as it has been transmitted to us by the Greek historians; but when we seek to identify it with the records and monuments which have been discovered, we are lost in doubts similar to those connected with the Pharaohs of the Scriptures. The name Sesostris is not to be found in Egypt, but Remeses II. fills a prominent position in all the great architectural remains of the country, and his deeds, as depicted in painting, resemble so closely those related of Sesostris that a very probable conclusion has been drawn as to his identity with the great warrior. The conquests of Remeses are recorded

in tablets on the rocks near Berytus, in Syria, and his victories in other parts of Asia are enumerated on the Egyptian monuments. They form the subject of the sculptures at Thebes, in the great temples of Karnak and Luxor, and in the palace commonly called the Memnonium; and when at length he appears to have turned his thoughts to peace, he speaks of himself as a monarch to whom the gods had granted dominion over the world. He seems also to have directed his attention to the good of his subjects in the manner related of Sesostris, for the grand project of opening a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea was carried out in his reign, together with other useful public works. He greatly encouraged architecture, and besides the remains of the magnificent temples and statues erected by him at Thebes, others are to be found at Memphis, Tanis, and in Ethiopia. The small temple of Zoan, or Tanis, which he adorned with unusual splendour, together with the numerous obeliaks bearing his name, testify to the fact that it was his favourite place of residence.

So also the eighty-sixth Psalm tells us that Tanis was the dwelling-place of the Pharaohs—"God wrought His signs in Egypt, His wonders in the field of Zoan;"—in the presence, as there is reason to believe, of the great conqueror, for whom the oppressed Israelites were compelled to build the "treasure cities Pithom and Raamses," or Remeses, and during whose reign Moses was saved from the waters of the Nile and educated at the monarch's court, whilst the lives of his countrymen "were made bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field;"—bricks made with straw being then the common material for building, as the crude brick remains in the neighbourhood of Thebes and Memphis at this day testify.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PERIOD OF EGYPTIAN GREATNESS, AND PROBABLY
OF THE BONDAGE OF THE ISRAELITES.

THERE is a verse in the Epistle to the Hebrews which probably we have often read with the idea floating in our minds that the words are used rather as an illustration than as an actual statement of facts. In it we are told that Moses "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."—(xi. 22). The treasures of Egypt! Egypt was a heathen land. Heathens are to us for the most part uncultivated and illiterate barbarians. What great temptations could a heathen people offer to Moses that his rejection of them should be deemed worthy of a record in the Bible?

In answer to this question, we will look at the cities and monuments of Egypt belonging to this period of its history, that so we may form some idea of the power of the monarch and the splendour of his court, in the days when the child of the despised Hebrew was brought up in the palace of the reigning king, and acknowledged as his daughter's adopted son. Two cities, Memphis and Thebes, at that time laid claim to be the most important in the land. Memphis, dating far back, even to the time of Menes, the near descendant of Ham, had doubtless from its antiquity a right to the reverence of the people. Its situation was striking. Through the green plain on which it was built flowed the Nile, bordered by a succession of palm groves of great extent. At their back rose the range of the African hills, and beyond were the

Pyramids—the tombs of Cheops, and Cephren, and Mycerinus, and their successors, whose names were even then hidden in the mystery of centuries gone by. In the days of Moses, we have every reason to believe that the magnificent granite blocks with which the Pyramids were built were covered with sculptures; and the colossal statue of the Sphinx, the emblematic representation of kingly power, which stood before them, must also then have been perfect. “Strange and unnatural as it was, yet from its stupendous size, and the wonderful calmness of its uncouth but expressive features, it must always have excited a feeling of astonishment and awe. The royal helmet of Egypt was on its head, and a beard, the sign of royalty, covered its chin. The stone pavement by which men approached the Pyramids ran up between its paws, and immediately under its breast was placed an altar, the smoke of which went up into the gigantic nostrils.” Thus it stood guarding the sepulchres of the Kings, whilst the massive tombs of the ordinary inhabitants of Memphis formed vast streets, stretching from the Pyramids to the city. At the present day the traveller can walk for miles amidst the ruins of these ancient sepulchres; and recent excavations have discovered, hewn in the rock, long galleries, forming part of a great temple of later date, which opened at about the distance of fifty yards into high arched vaults, each covering a magnificent black marble sarcophagus or coffin, smooth and sculptured within and without, and intended to contain, not the mortal remains of a great monarch, but the successive corpses of the bull Apis! It may be that although these precise sepulchres of Apis were not built till many years after Moses lived, yet the reverence which he must have seen paid by all around him to the degrading representative of the Deity, led him to obey more humbly and reverently the Almighty Spirit who spoke

to him from the Burning Bush, and proclaimed Himself "I AM THAT I AM."

The history of Thebes, called also Diospolis Magna, and by the Hebrews No-Amon, or the Sanctuary of Amun, spreads over a series of years, during which a race of powerful sovereigns added to its wealth and beauty. It must have been grander far than Memphis, except only in that grandeur which is derived from antiquity. The city stood upon a wide green plain, bordered by two ranges of mountains, and in the midst of it flowed the broad Nile. When ruin had overtaken it, more than eight centuries after Moses, it was described as having once been "populous No, situate amongst the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, or the sea-like stream, and whose wall was the 'sea-like stream' *—Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite."—(Nahum iii. 8, 9.) Infinite indeed is the fitting word to apply to Thebes. Its circumference is said to have been fifty English miles, and no architectural grandeur now exists which can equal, even in a remote degree, that which is discovered in the ruins of the fallen city. In the days of old, long vistas of courts, gateways, halls, and colonades crowded the plain on which it was built. Avenues of gateways, formed of two sloping towers, with a high perpendicular front between, formed the approach to the gigantic temple, now known as the Temple of Karnac, the grandest specimen of Egyptian architecture. One hundred and thirty-four columns supported the edifice, which was a mile in length. Twelve of these columns measured each thirty-six feet in circumference and sixty-six feet in height; and the capitals were so enormous that on every separate one a hundred men could comfortably stand together. The great hall alone would have contained

* Stanley's Sinai and Palestine.

four churches as large as St. Martin's-le-Grand in London. This stupendous building was connected with another (which stood where the village of Luxor is now to be seen) by a paved avenue or, as it was called, a "Dromos," no less than six hundred feet in length, formed of colossal sphinxes. From the temple the gateways, mingled with tall obelisks, stretched east and west, north and south, no doubt giving rise to the term used by Homer, the earliest of the Greek poets, who speaks of Thebes as "the city of the Hundred Gates." Painted sculptures of the gods and of conquering kings ornamented the portals within and without, and on each side of them were placed immense red flag-staffs, from which floated red and blue streamers.

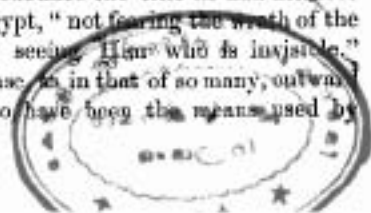
Before almost every gateway in this vast array were colossal figures, usually in granite, but sometimes in white or red marble, of the most famous Egyptian Kings, and close by them stood in pairs the obelisks before mentioned, then towering into the sky, but now only to be traced by the pedestals on either side, except where here and there one is still left, whilst the other has been carried away to be an object of interest and wonder in cities which, at the time of its erection, had not sprung into existence—Rome, Paris and St. Petersburg. Such was the external appearance of the great cities of Egypt, so far as imagination can restore them from the ruins which are left. They were vast collections of palaces and temples, and the wealth and skill employed in their erection might well be tempting to a man living like Moses in the royal palace, acknowledged as the cherished favourite and adopted son of the monarch's daughter, and having before him the prospect of riches and power to an extent which could scarcely in that age, or in any which succeeded it, have been equalled. For the expression, "the treasures of Egypt" most fitly also describes the

actual wealth of the country at this period of its highest prosperity. By the conquests in Ethiopia the gold mines of that land fell into the hands of the Egyptians, and when worked by them with the skill for which they were remarkable, the produce seemed boundless. Criminals, and prisoners taken in war were sent, under a guard of soldiers, to expiate their offences by labouring in these mines. So grievous was their condition, banished as they were from the light of heaven, and robbed of every thing which makes life valuable, that the Egyptian priests represented this kind of captivity as the punishment of the wicked in the world beyond the grave. But the toil of the unhappy prisoners brought wealth to Egypt. The mines are said to have yearly produced gold to the amount of the improbable sum of seventy millions sterling. The part of Ethiopia in which they were found received its name from the word *neub*, meaning gold, and was called Nubia, or the land of gold; and from the time when it became subject to Egypt, the precious metal was more abundant in the latter country than in any other portion of the world.

When such was the magnificence and power of the monarch at whose court Moses was brought up, great indeed must have been the faith which enabled him to refuse longer to bear the honorable title by which he was known, and to choose rather to suffer affliction with the oppressed Israelites than to enjoy "the pleasures of sin" and of heathenism for a season.

And we must remember that Moses was educated in the midst of idolatry. If he had any early recollections of a purer religion, it must have been from the teaching of his mother, Jochebed, who, attending upon him as his nurse, may possibly have instructed his infant mind, when it awakened to the consciousness of existence, in the reverence and worship due to the Almighty

Jehovah. But this teaching, if given at all, must have been in secret, without the aid of any external religious rites. All that Moses saw when he was a child must have been idolatry—in his eyes grand and awful. The monstrous forms which, though they strike us with astonishment, still seem to us uncouth, could not have been uncouth to him. They must have been solemn and overpowering, without any admixture of the grotesque. For a child's mind accepts without question what is put before it as sacred, and, having once accepted, it requires thought and experience, and qualities of intellect which comparatively few possess, to set aside early associations and see things as they really are. It may surely be considered probable that Moses, like thousands since, owed to the blessing of God upon a mother's piety that clearness of spiritual sight which enabled him at length to prefer the pure worship of the Hebrews to the magnificent mockery of the homage rendered to the god Apis. But the struggle between a pure faith and the temptations of a court would seem to have been long. Forty years of his life passed before he took the final resolution of relinquishing the court of Pharaoh; and although during that period his heart was evidently touched by the sufferings of the people, whom he had learnt to acknowledge as his brethren, he was still, it appears, so far attracted by the earthly learning and wisdom of the men who surrounded Pharaoh, that even the contamination of idolatry was not a sufficient motive to induce him to forsake it. It required the act by which he committed himself openly to the cause of the unhappy Israelites before his higher principles were finally victorious, and he was led to renounce the title he had hitherto borne, and to forsake Egypt, "not fearing the wrath of the king, but enduring as seeing Him who is invisible," (Heb. xi. 27.) In his case, as in that of so many, outward circumstances appear to have been the means used by



God's Providence to further the speedy growth of the inward life. Fear gave the impulse that was needed, and strengthened him for a step which he must probably before have contemplated as possible, or he would scarcely have ventured upon that intercourse with his brethren which, if discovered, could only bring upon him the indignation of the king and the contempt of his courtiers.

If Remeses II. was indeed the Pharaoh at whose court Moses was educated, he was a monarch whose indignation might well have been dreaded. His features have been transmitted to us in the colossal statues still to be seen in the ruined temples of Egypt. The face is long, its expression indicating profound repose and tranquillity, mingled with something like scorn. Again and again the likeness and figure are repeated, for the statues of Remeses are numerous. One, carved in granite, and of gigantic size, sate on the right side of the entrance to his palace at Thebes. Far and wide it must have been visible, "the vast hands resting on the elephantine knees," the arms, thicker than the whole bodies of other statues which have been the wonder and admiration of the world. But a still more striking representation of Remeses remains to this day in the Great Temple of Ipsambul, in Nubia. "Four statues of the great monarch were here erected, every feature magnified tenfold, so that ears, and mouth, and nose, and every link of the collar, and every line of the skin, sinks into you (as it has been said) with the weight of a mountain." The temple to which these statues belong was left unfinished by Remeses himself. At the entrance he is represented presenting offerings to Ra, or Re, the sun, the especial deity of the Pharaohs, or the children of the sun, and adored by them, at Heliopolis also, where Moses must often have seen the Egyptian ceremonies, even if he had never beheld the Temple of Remeses, at Ipsambul.

For the worship must in great measure have been the same at both places. At Ipsambul it can still be recalled. Hall within hall, dark, but enriched with the figures of Osiris and the glories of Remeses, lead through a corridor into the innermost sanctuary. It is a square rocky chamber, in which stood and still stands, though broken, the original altar. Behind the altar, seated against the rocky wall, their hands upon their knees, looking straight out through the door of the sanctuary, the corridor and the halls to the portal, which admitted a glimpse of the blue sky, sate and still sit the four great gods of the Temple, of whom Remeses himself is one. The king, who was worshipped as a god, must needs have been an object of awe; and yet, as it has been observed by one who had himself visited the temple, "the chief thought that strikes one at Ipsambul and elsewhere, is the transition in the Egyptian worship from the sublime to the ridiculous. The gods alternate between the majesty of antediluvian angels, and the grotesqueness of pre-Adamite monsters. By what strange contradiction could the same sculptors and worshippers have conceived the grave and awful forms of Ammon and Osiris, and the ludicrous images of gods in all shapes in the heavens, and in the earth, and in the waters under the earth, with heads of hawk and crocodile, and jackal and ape! What must have been the mind and muscles of a nation who could worship, as at Thebes, in the assemblage of hundreds of colossal cats! And, again, how extraordinary the contrast of the serenity and the savageness of the kings! Remeses, with the placid smile, grasping the shrieking captive by the hair, as the frontispiece of every temple, and Amun with the smile no less placid, giving him the falcion to smite them.*

* Stanley's Sinai and Palestine.

Perhaps no where so fully as in Egypt was the power of idolatry displayed, and it is only after studying there its astonishing contradictions, its greatness and its worse than nothingness, that we can thoroughly enter into the need of the warning so often repeated by Moses to the Israelites, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves—lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth, and lest when thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all the nations under the whole heaven." (Deut. iv. 15—19.)



CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROBABLE PERIOD OF THE EXODUS—B.C. 1245.

REMESES II. reigned upwards of sixty years; he is said to have had twenty-three sons, many of whom he must have survived, for he was succeeded by the thirteenth B. C. 1245. Pthahmen—the name being derived from Pthah, worshipped as the creative power and the father of the Gods.

It was in the reign of this monarch that the Exodus is supposed to have taken place. He was in no way equal to his father as a warrior, neither were his architectural monuments on the same grand scale as those of his immediate predecessor; but he was nevertheless the sovereign of a mighty and a highly civilised empire, and the submission forced upon him was a fact which even foreign nations recollected with terror. When, many years afterwards, the Israelites, after their settlement in the promised land, were carrying on a war with the Philistines—who had taken from them the ark of God, the great argument used to induce the lords of the country to restore the ark, was that the king of Egypt had hardened his heart in vain against the God of the Israelites, and that it was useless, therefore, for the Philistines to strive against a Being so mighty. (1 Sam. vi. 6.) The overthrow of the monarch and his host must have struck the Egyptians themselves with singular awe, from the honor which they were accustomed to shew to their dead as well as their living monarch.

Memphis, it has been seen, was a city of splendid tombs, and, at Thebes the funeral monuments are even more wonderful in their grandeur and solemnity. The wall of limestone cliffs, which encloses on the west the plain of Thebes, contains a deep gorge running up into the very heart of the hills. It is a valley bare and desolate; no human habitation is visible, and the stir of the city must always have been excluded from it. Here was the last resting place of the kings who reigned in Thebes. The entrance is through a sculptured portal in the face of the cliff. It leads into a long and lofty gallery, opening into successive halls and chambers, all covered with a ground of white stucco, on which are laid colors that remain to this day as brilliant as they were thousands of years ago. The excavations are, in fact, gorgeous palaces, hewn out of the rock, and ornamented with all the splendour of painting which a palace could require. There lie all the kings "in glory; every one in his own house." (Isaiah xiv. 18.) The work of the living monarch was that of preparing his splendid home in death; and the length of each reign can still be traced by the extent of the chambers, and the perfection with which they are finished. All the arts and the occupations of life are depicted vividly on these sepulchral walls;—the dinners, the boating, the dancing, the trades, are still to be seen, fresh, as it were, from the hands of the painter. The Egyptians believed in a resurrection, and it would appear as though they desired to behold on their awakening the forms and the scenes on which their eyes had closed. But they also faced the solemnities of death itself, and had clear, though strange, ideas of the judgment that must follow even kings in the world beyond the grave; and thus, in the funeral chambers, were painted endless processions of jackal headed gods, monstrous forms of good and evil genii, barges carrying mummies over the sacred lake,

representations of the goddess of justice, and twisted serpents in every possible form and attitude, some extending the whole length of a gallery, the head of the serpent being at the beginning, and the tail reaching to the end,—until at length the vaulted hall was reached, in the centre of which was the immense granite sarcophagus intended to contain the body of the king.*

The monarch who reigned over Egypt when Moses sought the deliverance of the Israelites, in all probability commenced his reign by preparing his sepulchre. Whether it was at Memphis, or at Thebes, it was doubtless intended to be the monument of his greatness; but God had appointed for him and his warriors another grave, and when the Almighty blew with his wind, "the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the mighty waters." (Exodus xv. 10.)

The record of the event seems to have lingered in some of the traditions of the country, although its exact circumstances are lost in the mass of fables with which the Egyptians covered the true history of their early kings. Diodorus, the Greek writer, who visited Egypt about the beginning of the Christian Era, tells us that a belief had been transmitted from father to son for many ages, that once an extraordinary ebb dried up the sea, so that its bottom was seen, and that a violent flow immediately afterwards brought back the waters to their former channel. This would certainly appear to have reference to Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. Terrible indeed must such a destruction—such an utter sweeping away of the vast army, have been, to a people accustomed to regard the bodies of the dead with an almost unnatural anxiety to preserve them from destruction,—an anxiety which seems to have induced them even to defer their enmity

* Stanley's Sinai and Palestine.

against the Israelites for the sake of paying the last honor to those who had died in the plague which struck the first born. It is expressly said in the Book of Numbers "the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians; for the Egyptians buried all their first born which the Lord had smitten among them, upon their gods also the Lord executed judgment." (Numbers xxxiii. 3, 4.)

In leaving Egypt, the Israelites were freed from the cruelty of their task-masters, but at the same time they lost the advantages of their wealth and trade. Often in their folly and ingratitude, forgetting what they had suffered, did they look back with longing eyes to the "flesh-pots of Egypt." Yet even in this respect their condition was greatly ameliorated. Instead of the tax of one-fifth of the produce of their fields, they now paid only one-tenth of their crop to the Levites; and Canaan, unlike Goshen, required but little labour for its cultivation. In the language of Moses to the Israelites, when with a sorrowful love for this country of promise, which he himself was never to enter, he lingeringly dwelt on its beauty, "The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden: but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (Deut. xi. 10, 11, 12.)

An equally marked distinction between the inhabitants of the two countries was enforced and perpetuated by the regulations which governed the worship of the Jews, both during their long wanderings in the wilderness, and afterwards when they were finally established in Canaan.

With the Egyptians the art of sculpture was the very pillar of religion. The priests in the temples first made their gods and then worshipped them. They adored figures of the sun, as representing the god Re, and those of the stars as being the visible symbols of other deities. Statues of men, the sculptured forms of beasts, birds, and fishes, were all objects of divine homage; but the law of the Jews was strict and imperative—"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God. (Exodus xi. 4, 5.)

So again, the Egyptian priests kept their heads shaved; the Jewish priests were forbidden to make themselves bald, or even to cut the corners of their beards. (Lev. xxi. 5.) The people of Lower Egypt marked their bodies with pricks in honour of their gods, and the officers of state imprinted upon their breasts and shoulders the name of the king whom they served; but the Jews were forbidden to cut their flesh or make any mark upon it. (Lev. xix. 28.)

The Egyptians buried food in the tombs with the bodies of their friends, and sent gifts of food to the temples for their use; but the Jews were forbidden to set apart any food for such purposes. (Deut. xvi. 13, 14.) The Egyptians planted groves of trees within the court-yard of their temples, but the laws of Moses forbade the Jews to plant any trees near the altar of the Lord. (Deut. xvi. 21.) The sacred bull, Apis, was chosen by the priests of Memphis for its black and white spots, but the Jews, in preparing their water of purification, were ordered to kill a red heifer without a spot. (Numbers xix. 2.)

That these precautions were absolutely needful, in order to preserve the Israelites from imitating the idolatry

of Egypt, is evident from the fact that, on the very first occasion when they were left without the presence of Moses, they set up the golden calf, doubtless in remembrance of Mnevis, the sacred ox of Heliopolis, which was honoured by the Egyptians next to the bull Apis.

In unimportant matters, the natural similarity between the habits of the two nations was permitted to continue. They were alike, amongst other things, in their manner of reckoning the beginning and end of the day: with the Greeks and the Etruscans the day began at noon, with the Romans, as with ourselves, at midnight, with the Persians at sunrise, but with the Jews and Egyptians it began at sunset.

The laws against witchcraft and false prophets, who should shew signs and wonders, had no doubt an allusion to the studies of sorcery and magic, and the juggling tricks practised by the wise men of Egypt, in order to strengthen their power over the minds of the common people.

When, in the presence of Pharaoh, the magicians ventured to oppose Moses, whatever miracles he worked they attempted to work also, and in some cases with apparent success. Like him, they cast upon the ground the rods which they held in their hands, and which then crawled about like serpents, becoming again straight rods when they were taken up. At the present day, after a lapse of three thousand years, the successors of the Egyptian magicians are still performing the same curious trick. The juggler takes up in his hand the *Naja*, a small viper, and pressing a finger on the nape of its neck, puts it into a catalepsy, which makes it motionless and stiff like a rod. When, on being released, it regains its power of motion, the bystanders fancy that the magician's rod has been changed into a serpent.

For the pretended arts of prophesying, and looking into the secrets of nature, the Egyptians used drinking cups, made of silver and other metals, which were engraved on the inside with mystic lines and sacred figures.

It is to a cup of this kind that reference is made in the history of Joseph. The popular belief in the power of these magic cups was so great that they were copied even in distant countries, and, although no Egyptian divining cups remain to us, we know their form by the Assyrian copies.



CHAPTER IX.

LAWS, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS OF THE EGYPTIANS.

THE rapidity with which Pharaoh was able to collect his army when he pursued the Israelites, is an indication of the power of the Egyptian kings well worthy of remark. A fifth part of the population had died suddenly, one in every house—the people must have been paralysed with grief and fear—yet after a very short intervening time, chiefly spent, as it would seem, in burying the dead, six hundred chosen chariots, with other chariots and horsemen, summoned from the whole of Egypt, all in order under regular captains, were ready for action. This fact becomes in a degree less surprising when we learn that the Egyptians had always a very large army, no less than 410,000 men, though they were for the most part militia troops who were only exercised at certain times, and were allowed to support themselves by agriculture. A portion of land free from taxes was given to each soldier for his ordinary pay, and when on active service he received besides a daily allowance of rather more than five pounds of bread, two pounds of meat, and two pints of wine. The Egyptians understood the art of war well. In the pictures which describe their military movements are to be seen masses of foot soldiers with spears and shields, fighting in the manner practised by the celebrated Macedonian Phalanx. Bows and arrows, and slings, were common amongst them, but they used, besides, every weapon which was known before the introduction of firearms, and conducted sieges with the same instruments afterwards employed by the Romans. The soldier's chief

defence was his shield, covered with a bull's hide, and having the hair outside. It was sometimes studded with nails, and strengthened with rims of metal. The chariots, which are especially mentioned as having formed a large part of Pharaoh's warlike army, when he pursued the Israelites, were generally made of wood, and were exceedingly light. The wheels were bound with a rim of metal. The harness of the horses was very elegant, but no blinkers were used. The chariot usually carried only two persons, the warrior and his charioteer. If the warrior was called upon to encounter a hostile chief, and the nature of the ground required him to alight, the driver moved off to a distance to await the issue of the combat. When on an excursion of pleasure, or on a visit to a friend, an Egyptian gentleman, or even the king, mounted alone and drove himself, the footmen and other attendants running, before and behind the car, ready, when the carriage stopped, to take the reins and walk the horses till their master returned, but not venturing to step into it.

Though skilled in warfare, the Egyptians do not appear to have been what is generally termed a warlike people. They were at all times easily conquered. Their chief importance as a nation was derived from their progress in arts and civilization. That they could have advanced so far in knowledge and science seems the more strange when we find that a system prevailed amongst them resembling that of the castes in India, which has always been considered the greatest obstacle to the improvement of the country. They were divided into separate classes, and compelled to observe a rigid separation. From the sovereign down to the meanest of his subjects, every Egyptian was obliged to move according to an appointed rule. His food and dress, his employments and amusements, were all appointed, and no class could in any way interfere with another.

Herodotus says there were seven principal castes, —priests, soldiers, interpreters, shopkeepers, boatmen, herdsmen, and swineherds. Other persons have reckoned them differently, but in fact every business formed of itself a caste. The king was supreme over all, but he was not more free than his subjects from submission to laws and customs. He rose at a fixed hour, read his letters, and despatched public business. After this he performed the ablutions required before prayer, and having dressed himself in his royal robes went, attended by his officers, to offer sacrifice in the temple, and listen to a discourse on the excellence of the laws, which ended in a panegyric upon himself, and an enumeration of his virtues. He was told that he was pious, and true, and generous; and possessed many other striking virtues. If these statements were true, it was thought that they would confirm him in his goodness, and if they were false, it was hoped they would shame him into trying to deserve them. The remainder of the day was mapped out in the same precise manner. The hours for exercise, amusement and food were all marked, and even the kind and quantity of meat which he might eat, and the measure of wine he might drink, were prescribed. The monarchy was hereditary—but there were exceptions to this rule. Kings, it is said, were sometimes chosen on account of their public services. No slave or hired person was permitted to attend upon the monarch. He was from his youth waited upon by members of the great families whose children were his companions. This regulation was adopted in order to avoid the risk of implanting in his mind any ideas unworthy of a ruler; and in order further to strengthen his principles; he was made subject to a custom which universally prevailed in Egypt, and underwent a trial after his death. This was one of the most remarkable circumstances connected with Egyptian funerals.

The body of a dead man after having been embalmed, and placed in a mummy case, was set upright against the wall of a room, until the tomb in which it was to be laid was ready. It was then carried forth and deposited in a hearse, which was drawn on a sledge to the sacred lake of the Nome, or province, to which the deceased belonged.

Forty-two judges, who had been previously summoned, were placed in a semicircle near the banks of the lake, and when the hearse reached the appointed spot a boat, provided expressly for the occasion, and under the direction of a boatman, called in the Egyptian language Charon, was brought up. In this boat the coffin was laid, and it was then lawful for any person to bring forward his accusation against the deceased. If it could be proved that he had led an evil life, the body was deprived of the accustomed sepulture; but if the accuser failed to establish his charge to the satisfaction of the judge, he was subjected to the heaviest penalties. When there was no accuser, or when the accusation had been disproved, the relations ceased from their lamentations, and pronounced encomiums upon the deceased—the assembled multitude joining in his praises. The body was then rowed across the lake, and taken to the family catacombs, which were generally very large, and much ornamented. Mummies of the lower order were buried together in a common repository.

The character of the king underwent, as it has been stated, the same test as that of his subjects. If anyone could establish proofs of his impiety or injustice, he was denied the usual funeral rites when, in the presence of the assembled multitude, his body was brought to the sacred lake.

Several instances are recorded of Egyptian monarchs having been deprived of these honours, by the opposing voices of the people. If, on the contrary, a king was judged to have lived a good life, a magnificent funeral

took place, and a general mourning, which lasted seventy-two days, was proclaimed. The people tore their garments, and kept a solemn fast, abstaining from every luxury. The temples were closed, sacrifices were forbidden, no festivals were celebrated, and a procession of men and women wandered through the streets, throwing dust and mud upon their heads, and twice every day singing a funeral dirge in honour of the deceased monarch.

Next to the sovereign, the priests held the chief rank in Egypt—but the word priest, as used by the Egyptians, had not strictly the same meaning as with us. Priests were not necessarily spiritual persons. Judges, architects, physicians, and many others who, like them, had received a liberal education, and followed a learned profession, were considered to belong to the priestly caste.

The whole order was remarkable for their simple mode of living. Those who were employed about the temples were divided into distinct grades, and were only initiated into the mysteries of their religion by degrees. They were obliged to be especially attentive to cleanliness. The linen garments which they wore were constantly fresh; and twice every day, and twice every night, they were accustomed to wash themselves;—some who pretended to a more strict observance of religious duties, using for this purpose water which had been tasted by the Ibis, and which was supposed, in consequence, to be unquestionably pure. The priests were not allowed to touch fish or pork, or to eat lentils, onions, peas or beans; but beef and geese were cooked for them every day, and an allowance of wine was given them, all being provided at the public expense. They were also free from taxation, and a third part of the property of the country belonged to them. Their right to these lands was recognized from the earliest days, for when, in the time of the famine, Joseph bought the property of the people, and gave them corn in exchange, it is expressly said, “only the land of

the priests bought he not." (Gen. xlvii, 22.) The prophets formed one of the principal grades of the priesthood. They directed the management of the priestly revenues, took a conspicuous part in public processions, and when any new regulations were introduced in affairs of religion they, in conjunction with the chief priests, were the first whose opinion was consulted. The laws of religion were closely mixed up with those for the government of the country, and both were observed with great reverence, for they were said to be derived from the gods. In reality they were the work of various lawgivers, who from time to time had induced the people to conform to the regulations which they deemed necessary for the country. The judges who administered these laws were held in great respect—the highest in rank next to the magistrates of the capitol, were called *Nomarchs*, from the *Nomes* or districts into which the country was divided. They were chosen from the three great cities, Thebes, Memphis, and Heliopolis, and were required to be of irreproachable character. Large salaries were given them from government to place them beyond the temptation of bribery. There were no professional advocates, for it was thought that their eloquence might be the means of misleading the judge.

In order more effectually to protect the virtuous, and detect the wicked, it was enacted that every one should at certain times present himself before the magistrate or provincial governor, and state his name and place of abode, and the means by which he gained his livelihood, the particulars being duly registered by the official scribes. Whether a passport was then given by the magistrate, or the names were merely enrolled, does not appear. The Egyptian laws were in general humane. Murder was punished with death, but the power of pardon was in the hands of the king. One monarch

is said to have made a rule not to sentence any one to death, but to condemn persons convicted of capital crimes to labour at raising the ground about the town to which they belonged. By this means he protected the cities from the reach of the inundations of the Nile. If a father was guilty of the murder of a child, it was ordained that the corpse should be fastened to his neck, and that he should pass three whole days and nights in this position, under the watch of a public guard. Parricide being considered the most unnatural of crimes, was visited with a cruel punishment. The criminal was first tortured, and then burnt to death. Minor offences were generally punished with the stick, a mode of chastisement still greatly in vogue amongst the inhabitants of the valley of the Nile, and held in such esteem by them that they speak of it as being "sent from heaven to be a blessing to mankind."

The Egyptians had a singular custom respecting theft. Those who followed the *profession* of thief gave in their names to the chief of the robbers, and agreed that he should be informed of every thing they might thenceforward steal. The owner of lost goods always applied by letter to the chief for their recovery, and having stated their quality and quantity, and the day and hour when they were stolen, with other requisite particulars, the goods were restored on payment of one-quarter of their value. As it was considered impossible altogether to put an end to theft, it was considered better to make the sacrifice of a part than to lose the whole. The chief of the robbers was in fact the chief of the police, a respectable citizen, and a man of the greatest integrity and honour.

The laws regarding debt varied from time to time. One of the most remarkable was that which pronounced it illegal for any one to borrow money without giving in pledge the body of his father, or of his nearest relative.

If he failed to redeem this sacred deposit he was considered infamous, and at his death he was not only denied the usual funeral rites, but neither his children nor any of his family could be interred so long as the debt was unpaid: the creditor being put in actual possession of his family tomb.

Reverence for their ancestors, and for their elders, was characteristic of the Egyptians. Children were obliged to shew the greatest deference to their parents, and a young man, if seated, was expected to rise on their approach. Disrespect to elders is indeed entirely an invention of modern days, the Divine command, "Honour thy father and mother," being recognised as a law amongst nations otherwise sunk in the grossest heathenism.

Next to magistrates, physicians and surgeons may be mentioned as belonging to the priestly caste. They appear to have used only the simplest remedies, although they were well-skilled in the knowledge of herbs. Each doctor confined himself to the study of some particular disease. One undertook the management of the eye, another of the heart, another of the teeth, &c., for the Egyptians apparently did not understand how much one member depends on the action of another, and how necessary therefore it is for a doctor to be acquainted with the working of the whole system. So careful were they to avoid innovation, that a physician who adopted a new mode of treatment was liable to be punished by the law if his patient died under it.

Magicians were another division of the caste of priests. The word originally meant "a wise man," and was applied to all men of learning; but afterwards it was mixed up with religion, and became an art practised by a separate caste. There is something very mysterious in the power of these Egyptian magicians. The Scriptures

speak of them as actually able to perform miracles to a certain extent; and even in the present day it would appear, from the inquiries of travellers, that a singular power still lingers amongst the Egyptians, which is often attributed to jugglery, but which it seems impossible always to account for by any such explanation. No one of these classes was thought to be of higher rank than the others, although persons of superior education must necessarily have possessed the greatest influence in the state. All men were by the Egyptians considered equally noble; the rigid distinctions of caste do not appear to have interfered with social intercourse, but only to have formed, as it were, laws by which each individual was compelled to follow a certain course of employment. That the poorer classes were in a condition of comfort we learn from the lamentations of the Israelites in the Wilderness, for although an oppressed people in other respects, they looked back with regret to the time when they "sat by the fleshpots, and did eat bread to the full." (Exodus xvi. 3)—and even wept when they thought of the fish which they "did eat in Egypt freely—the cucumber, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions." (Numbers xi. 5.)

The foreign commerce of the Egyptians was chiefly carried on by Phœnician ships. That it was very extensive is proved by the fact that in some of the ancient tombs at Thebes a number of Chinese vessels, with Chinese inscriptions, have been found. There was, besides, an immense inland traffic on the Nile, and numbers of boatmen were also employed in managing pleasure-boats on artificial sheets of water. It would have been contrary to the laws of caste for an Egyptian gentleman to use an oar himself.

The shops in the cities of Egypt appear to have resembled stalls, open in front, as in the bazaars of Eastern

towns in the present day. Everything was sold by weight, and the money which was used in the form of rings of gold and silver was also paid by weight. Poulterers suspended geese and other birds from a pole, which at the same time supported an awning to shade them from the sun.

Some idea of domestic life in Egypt may be gathered from the pictures still existing. The houses appear to have been usually entered through a court, with a portico in front supported by columns. The court was the reception room for visitors. It contained a few trees, and in the centre was a tank with a fountain. The apartments for the family, which were connected with the portico by passages, were small but lofty, and, in order to keep out the heat, lighted only by small windows. On the top of the house was a terrace, covered by a roof raised on pillars. This was the family parlour, and the best which could be constructed in such a climate; and here, too, they slept at night in the summer season. The walls and ceilings of the rooms were richly painted—the former being laid out in compartments, each having a pattern, with an appropriate border. The Egyptians of the upper classes usually sat on handsome chairs of ebony and other rare woods, inlaid with ivory, and covered with rich stuffs; but occasionally they used stools and low seats, and some sat cross-legged or on one knee upon mats and carpets. Chairs, such as are at the present day called Kangaroo chairs, were also in use among them. Of the furniture of their bedrooms we know little or nothing, except that they had a peculiar manner of supporting the head by a half cylinder of wood or alabaster in lieu of a pillow.

Every part of an Egyptian house was placed under the protection of a tutelary deity, and it was probably at the ceremony of dedication that the owner's name was writ-

ten over the entrance, with a lucky sentence for a favourable omen. The Jews may have derived this custom of dedication from the Egyptians, since Moses alludes to it in the Book of Deuteronomy, when he repents, as part of the address which was to be delivered to the people before going forth to battle—"What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man dedicate it." (Deut. xx. 5.)

The rich possessed houses in the country as well as in the town, and enjoyed the luxury of spacious gardens, watered by canals, which communicated with the Nile. These gardens were arranged very much in the fashion now prevailing amongst the Dutch. The fruit trees were well pruned, and the flowers neatly tied up, those which were peculiarly choice, being set apart to grow in borders. They had stables, coach-houses for their travelling chariots, farm-yards, granaries, and poultry-yards; in fact all that we are accustomed to associate with an advanced stage of society. Vineyards and orchards were planted around tanks from which water was conveyed to the trees by buckets or by skins. Solomon seems to have imitated this practice, for he tells us in the Book of Ecclesiastes, that he made "gardens and orchards, and planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits," and adds, that he made also "pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees." (Eccles. xi. 5, 6.)

In their entertainments they appear to have omitted nothing which could promote the comfort and amusement of their guests. The party when invited to dinner met at mid-day, the guests arriving in chariots, or palanquins, borne by their servants. If they came on foot they were accompanied by an attendant bearing a parasol, sometimes made of leather, stretched over a light frame. Before entering the festive chamber, water was offered to those

who came from a distance, or who particularly desired it, that they might wash their feet, and either then or immediately before dinner the guests washed their hands, the water being brought in the same manner as at the present day, in ewers and basins, which, in the houses of the rich, were made of gold or other costly material. The custom of washing the feet before dinner is mentioned in the time of Joseph, who ordered his servants to fetch water for his brethren, that they might wash their feet before they ate. The Egyptians were shaved and wore wigs, and when they sat down to table it was customary for a servant to attend every guest, and to anoint his head with perfumed ointment, contained in a vase, sometimes of alabaster, and sometimes of porcelain. So strong was the odour, and so perfect the composition of this ointment, that it has been known to retain its scent for several hundred years. One of the alabaster vases in the museum at Alnwjek Castle contains some of this ancient ointment, between two and three thousand years old, and yet its odour remains.

After the ceremony of anointing was over, a lotus flower was presented to each guest, who held it in his hand during the entertainment. Servants then brought necklaces of flowers; a garland was also put round the head, whilst a single lotus bud, or a full-blown flower, was so attached as to hang over the forehead. Servants were constantly employed to bring other fresh flowers from the garden in order to supply the guests as their bouquets faded.

Wine, of which the Egyptians had several different kinds, was the first thing offered to the guests, and whilst the actual dinner was in course of preparation, a band, consisting of the harp, lyre, guitar, tambourine, flute and other instruments, played the favourite airs and songs of the country, and professional dancers were introduced for the entertainment of the company.

The dinner consisted of a considerable number of dishes, and as the meat was killed for the occasion, as it is at the present day in eastern and tropical climates, some time elapsed before it was put on the table. During this interval there was leisure for conversation, besides the attention paid to the music and dancing. The chit-chat of the day, public affairs, and questions of business or amusement, occupied the attention of the men, and sometimes the trifling circumstances of domestic annoyance formed the topic of conversation. The sculpture on a tomb at Thebes represents an accident which must have occurred at an Egyptian party, between two and three thousand years ago. The guests are assembled, the wine has been sent round, and conversation is going on, when a young man, reclining with his whole weight against a column in the centre of the apartment, throws it down upon the assembled guests, who are seen with uplifted hands endeavouring to protect themselves and escape from its fall. A talent for caricature is observable in this as in many other instances in the paintings on the Egyptian tombs, and even women are not spared. They were allowed to mix freely with the men, although at a party they were frequently entertained separately in a different part of the same room. Their position in Egypt was indeed at all times singularly high. It was rare for an Egyptian to have more than one wife, and a Greek writer tells us that it was part of a marriage contract that no objection should be made by the husband to the commands of his wife whatever they might be. This stipulation probably referred, however, only to the management of the house, and the regulation of domestic affairs. The ladies who were present at the parties given by the wealthy Egyptians, appear to have been very much like what are termed "fine ladies" at the present day. They are represented as being dressed superbly,

wearing jewels and a profusion of ringlets, and being fanned by slaves, as they sit in easy chairs or recline on couches. Their conversation whilst waiting for dinner was evidently carried on with great animation. The question of dress was not forgotten and the patterns or the value of their trinkets were discussed with much eagerness. Inquiries were made as to the maker of an ear-ring, the shop where it was purchased, its workmanship, and style. Jewels were compared; each coveted her neighbour's, or preferred her own, and delighted to display her gold and silver ornaments, her delicate robe, neat sandals, and beautiful plaited hair. The Egyptian women were very proud of their hair, and locks of it, when very long, were sometimes cut off and wrapped up separately to be buried with them in their tomb.

Whilst music, dancing, and conversation were thus occupying the attention of the guests in the dining apartments, the servants were busy in the court-yard and the kitchen. An ox, a kid, a wild goat, or a gazelle, with geese, ducks, widgeons, quails, or other birds were obtained for the occasion; but mutton was unlawful food. Geese, and other wild and tame fowl, were served up entire, or, at least, only deprived of their feet and pinion joints; fish were also brought to table whole, whether boiled or fried, the tails and fins being removed; but whatever quadruped had been chosen, it was usually killed in the court-yard, and cut up according to a regular rule. The head was left, and was sometimes given away to a poor person as a reward for holding the walking-sticks of those guests who came on foot. Servants carried the joints on wooden trays to the kitchen, where the cook, who, in large establishments, had several persons under him, prepared them for the table, either by boiling or roasting. Other servants took charge of the pastry,

which the bakers or confectioners had made for the dinner-table; and this department, which appears to have been attached to the kitchen, was yet more varied than that of the cook. An endless succession of vegetables was also required on all occasions, and, when dining in private, dishes of that kind were in greater request than joints, even at the tables of the rich. Fruit was eaten as freely as vegetables; figs and grapes being peculiarly valued.

The dinner was served on a round table, either of stone or some hard wood, which was not covered by linen, but was probably wiped with a sponge or napkin after the dishes were removed, and polished by the servants when the company had retired. The guests sat on the ground, or on stools and chairs, and, having neither knives and forks, nor any substitute for them, they ate with their fingers. Spoons were introduced at table when soup or other liquids required their use, and perhaps even a knife was employed on some occasions to facilitate the carving of a large joint.

The Egyptians, who were scrupulously attentive to the rites of religion, observed a custom of saying grace before dinner, and in order to recall to the assembled guests the transitory nature of earthly pleasures, it was usual to produce, during or after their repast, a wooden image, in the form of a human mummy, and to shew it to each of the guests, reminding him of his mortality, and that he would some day resemble that figure. The image was made in the form of Osiris, which was the shape given to all mummies, for it was supposed that the deceased, as soon as he had passed the ordeal of his final judgment, was admitted into the presence of the deity who was his judge, and whose name was then prefixed to his own. The representation of death appears to have

been less terrible to the Egyptians than it is to the modern nations of Europe; so little indeed did they object to have it brought before them, that they even introduced the mummy of a deceased relative at their parties, and placed it at table as one of the guests.

After dinner, music and singing were resumed; men and women performed feats of agility, and jugglers were introduced to amuse the company with their tricks. Persons who preferred it occupied themselves with games, much resembling those of modern days. King Remeses III. played draughts with his favourite ladies; and as far back as Osirtasen I., whose date must be about the time of Joseph, the Egyptians found amusement in a game common in these days amongst the lower order of Italians. Two persons simultaneously threw out the fingers of one hand while one of them guessed the sum of both. Dice appear to have been used at a very early period. The games adapted to children were such as tended to promote health, or to divert them in some laughable manner. Little Egyptian girls had painted dolls, with legs moved by strings, provided for them, as little English girls have now. The game of ball was not confined to children. It was played especially by women, and in a very peculiar manner. A person unsuccessful in catching a ball, was obliged to suffer another to seat herself sideways on her back, and try to catch the ball as it was thrown from the opposite side by a woman mounted in a similar manner.

Amongst the lower orders the amusements were chiefly such as required dexterity or strength. Wrestling, and mock fights, bull fights, and lifting weights, were amongst their sports, and all classes delighted in the chase of wild animals, and in fowling and fishing. The Egyptians were fond of flowers, and gardens were always connected with their villas. Their taste appears to have

been formal. The trees were planted in rows, and the walks were quite straight. Vines were very abundant. The most usual method of training them was in bowers, or in avenues formed by rafters and columns. Great care was taken to preserve the clusters of grapes, and about the time of the vintage boys were employed to frighten away the birds with a sling and the sound of the voice, as they are now employed in the corn fields in England.

The products of Egypt were rich and various, a fact proved by the Egyptian names given to many precious stones and to articles of value known to us at the present day. Thus, emeralds are so called from Mount Smaragdus in Upper Egypt; topaz and sapphire stones derive their name from the islands of Topazion and Sapphirene in the Red Sea; ammonia was found in the oasis of Ammon in the Libyan desert; syenite took its name from the city of Syene; nitre from Mount Nitria; and alabaster from the island of Alabastron. But these derivations do not so much prove the natural wealth of the country as that the people were the first who discovered and were able to make use of these productions.

The skill of the Egyptians in handicraft is known to us by our discoveries of the utensils which they used, and many of which are now kept in the British Museum. They appear to have worked generally without iron or steel, although there is no reason to suppose that iron was unknown to them. The arms, tools and knives which have been found are generally of bronze, so finely tempered and polished that with them they could cut granite, which is the hardest kind of stone.

The art of glass-blowing has already been mentioned as represented in the tombs of Beni Hassan, and a still further proof that it was known at a very early period is derived from the fact that a glass bead has been found at Thebes, bearing the name of a king who lived 1500 years

before Christ. Emeralds, amethysts and other expensive gems were successfully imitated, and a necklace of false stones could be purchased at a Theban jeweller's as well as at the great shops in London and Paris.

Another art, almost peculiar to Egypt, was the manufacture of a peculiar kind of porcelain, covered with enamel. It was introduced into Europe about three centuries ago by a Frenchman named Palissy, but not until the labour of many years had been spent in discovering the art.

The linen made by the Egyptians was singularly fine in texture, and was everywhere highly valued. It was, indeed, their chief article of exchange for the few things which they imported. Paper was made from the leaves of a reed called papyrus, which formerly grew abundantly in the marshy districts of the Nile. The root was used as fuel and for making various utensils. The papyrus was employed in other countries also, and, indeed, was a common writing material until the seventh century A. D., when it was given up, and parchment was employed instead. The right of growing and selling the papyrus belonged exclusively to the government, and this made paper so dear that persons in humble life could not afford to purchase it for ordinary purposes, and were therefore accustomed to use instead pieces of broken pottery, stone, board, and leather. A soldier's leave of absence, accounts, and various memoranda were often written on the fragments of an earthenware vase; and pictures which were to be sculptured were frequently sketched on slabs of limestone or wooden panels, prepared with a thin coating of stucco.

The dress of the lower orders of men in Egypt was generally but a very scanty covering, consisting of little more than an apron; but some appear to have worn either a kind of linen dress, ornamented with fringe, or a sort

of shirt, with loose or tight sleeves, open at the neck. The dress of the priests, and of persons of rank, consisted of an under garment similar to the apron already referred to, and a loose upper robe with full sleeves, which was fastened by a girdle. A shirt, with short tight sleeves, was also sometimes worn under the loose robe, the right arm being then left exposed.

The dresses of the priests varied on different occasions, necklaces, bracelets, garlands and other ornaments being put on during the religious ceremonies in the temple. A leopard skin was the ornamental robe of some of the high priests, and also of the monarch when officiating in the temples in services of great solemnity. But the under robes of the priests were always made of linen. Woollen upper garments were however allowed them for the purpose of a cloak, and cotton dresses were sometimes worn. Their sandals were made of the papyrus and of palm leaves.

The kings of Egypt were obliged at their coronation to put on, at the same time, two crowns, representing the union of Upper and Lower Egypt. On other occasions they were permitted to wear each separately. They, as well as their subjects of the male sex, were accustomed to wear wigs; the natural hair being only allowed to grow as a token of mourning. So particular, indeed, were the Egyptians on this point, that whenever their artists intended to convey the idea of a man of low condition or slovenly habits, he was represented with a beard; but they nevertheless wore false beards, made of plaited hair, and of a peculiar form, according to the rank of the person to whom it belonged. Even children were shaved, only locks at the front, sides, and back of the head being left. The lower orders worked in the sun without any covering to the head.

The dresses of women of the inferior classes consisted

sometimes of a loose robe or shirt reaching to the ankles and fastened at the neck, like those of the men, with a string. Over it they wore a kind of petticoat, secured at the waist by a girdle, and, in the time of mourning, this petticoat was frequently their only dress. The higher orders wore a gown of richly-coloured stuff, presenting a variety of patterns; it was fastened by a coloured sash at the waist, or by straps over the shoulders. Above this was a large, loose robe, made of the finest linen, with full sleeves. During some religious ceremonies the right arm was, as in the case of the priests, left exposed. Ladies wore their hair long and hanging down in a great number of plaits, two or three of which were usually fastened together at the extremity by a coloured woollen string. An ornamental fillet was bound round the head, and a lotus bud, which was attached to it, rested upon the forehead. The peasants always went barefooted, and on some occasions the middle classes followed the same practice; but ladies and men of the upper ranks paid great attention to the beauty of their sandals, which were made sometimes of woven or interlaced work, formed of palm leaves, papyrus stalks or other similar materials, and sometimes of leather. They were frequently lined with cloth, on which the figure of a captive was painted. This idea agrees perfectly with the expression often occurring in the hieroglyphic inscriptions: "You have trodden the impure Gentiles under your powerful feet."

Many articles belonging to the toilet have been found at Thebes and other places in Egypt; amongst them are mirrors, combs, bottles and vases for holding ointment and *kohl*, or collyrium—a powder with which it was customary to stain the eyelids and brows. Pins and needles have also been discovered in the Egyptian tombs. The pins are frequently of considerable length, with large gold heads. The needles were of bronze, but only those of a

large size have been found. Mirrors were made of a mixed metal, chiefly copper, and this substitute for our modern looking-glass was susceptible of a lustre which in some of those discovered at Thebes has been partially revived even at the present day, though the mirror had lain buried for centuries. Metal mirrors were used by the Israelites, who no doubt brought them from Egypt. The brazen laver made by Moses for the Tabernacle was composed of the looking-glasses of the women which assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation.



CHAPTER X.

RISE OF THE INTERCOURSE AND CONNECTION BETWEEN
THE KINGS OF EGYPT AND JUDEA.

FROM the sketch which has been given of the civilization of Egypt, some idea may perhaps have been gained of the greatness and power of its monarchs, at a time when the Israelites were slowly establishing themselves in Canaan, when Rome had not even begun to exist, and when the history of the Greeks is lost in the myths of their religion and the legends of the Trojan war. But among the kings who immediately succeeded the great Remeses, and who chiefly bore his name, there are none whose deeds are sufficiently remarkable or well authenticated to require special notice, with the exception of Remeses III., who was a great conqueror, and by whose inroads through Palestine into Syria and other parts of Asia the power of the Philistines on the coast must have been much weakened.

Whether the Egyptian army at this period occupied any part of the country is uncertain, though mention is made in the account given of the exploits of David's valiant men, that Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, "slew an Egyptian, a goodly man."—(2 Sam. xiii. 21). Remeses III. built a new temple or palace at Thebes, from the sculptures upon which we obtain the derivation of an English word. The King is represented sitting under a canopy, and carried along on the shoulders of men. This canopy was the frame on which was stretched a gauze-

net to keep off the gnats and flies, though the gauze, because of its transparency, is not shown by the sculptor. This Egyptian gauze covering was called by the Romans *conopseum*, and hence is derived our own word canopy.

The lid of the sarcophagus in which Remeses III. was buried is now in the Museum at Cambridge.

Under the kings who succeeded Remeses III., Upper Egypt sank, whilst Lower Egypt rose in wealth and power. The causes of this change are uncertain, and we are unable to fix the date when Thebes ceased to be the capital of Egypt. But the want of unity in the population, arising from the strict lines drawn by the system of castes between the upper and lower ranks of society, must have been a fatal cause of weakness. The lower orders were nearly allied to the Arabs, and were scarcely of the same blood and language as the Copts, who were the higher and more intellectual race. In the Delta, on the contrary, there was a less marked separation; and it has been noticed in the history of mankind that the pure races have usually been less open to improvement than those which are more mixed. The strength of the English character in the present day appears to be greatly derived from the mingling of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Danish and Norman races.

But another cause of the downfall of Thebes may be found in the change which about this time took place in the commerce of Egypt. For an explanation of this circumstance, it will be necessary to glance at the history of the Jews.

Notwithstanding the memory of years of bondage, intercourse with the great idolatrous nation of Egypt seem always to have been, more or less, a snare to the Israelites. They appear to have been drawn to it by a fascination which, like that of the rattlesnake, was but the prelude to destruction. Whether the feelings were always reciprocated

by the Egyptians may perhaps be doubted, for an incident which occurred during the lifetime of David seems to indicate that the kings of Egypt, however necessary they might consider it for political reasons to shew friendship, or even to make intimate alliances, with the powerful Jewish sovereigns, their near neighbours, nevertheless had more real sympathy with their enemies. It was in the early period of David's reign that Joab, the general of the Jewish army, having invaded and conquered Edom, gave way to the ferocity which was his characteristic, and ordered all the males in the country to be slain. Hadad, a child of the royal family, escaped, and was carried by his father's servants to Egypt. The young Edomite—the hereditary enemy of the Jewish monarch—was received by the Pharaoh who then sat upon the throne of Lower Egypt, not only with kindness, but with marked favour. A house and lands were bestowed upon him, a sufficient maintenance was provided for him, and when he grew up Pharaoh gave him for a wife the sister of his own queen, Taphenes. The favour thus early shown continued undiminished for years. The infant son of Hadad was watched over by his royal aunt in Pharaoh's palace, and brought up with his cousins, the king's sons; and when at length Hadad's ambition and revenge awakened, and on the death of David and Joab, and the accession of Solomon, he determined to re-assert his claims to his dominions, Pharaoh's expostulations were made in a tone of affectionate reproach, which show how entirely the happiness and prosperity of the Edomite prince had been provided for in the land of his exile. "Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me that behold thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered Nothing, howbeit let me go in any wise." (1 Kings xi. 22.)

Hadad departed, and from that time was one of the most powerful of Solomon's enemies.

The king who received Hadad was, it appears, the last of his line. His successor, called on the monument Sheshonk, and in Scripture Shishak, was a sovereign of Lower Egypt, the founder of a new dynasty, who raised his own city, Bubastis, to independence, and then conquered Thebes; and it would seem that from this period the Thebaid fell to the rank of a province. For some years afterwards Bubastis, the city of the goddess Pasht, was the most important town in Egypt. It was situated on the bank of the shallow Pelusiac branch of the Nile, about seventy miles from the mouth of the river, and it was the capital of the little district or Nome of that name. Being next to the Nome of Heliopolis, in which many Jews were settled, there would naturally be a sympathy and alliance between the two nations, and the existence of this feeling is corroborated by Scripture.

Solomon, we are told, married a daughter of the ex-King of Egypt, and built for her a palace so splendid that when the Queen of Sheba visited it, and saw its magnificence, and the splendour of the royal court, "there was no more spirit in her." This Egyptian princess was probably the daughter of Shishak, though his name is not actually mentioned. We know, however, that during the early part of Solomon's reign, the intercourse with Egypt was constant and friendly. Chariots and horses were brought out of Egypt to Palestine at a great expense; and the celebrated linen of the former country was a constant article of commerce—whilst the King of Egypt, knowing how acceptable to his son-in-law would be the Canaanitish town of Gezer, lying between Jaffa and Jerusalem, made an expedition against it, and having taken it, gave it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.

The reign of Solomon was, upon the whole, peaceful and prosperous. But the greatness of the Jewish monarch

was not brought about without injury to his powerful ally; for Solomon's conquests, and the enlargement of commerce which accompanied them, appear to have been one of the chief causes of the downfall of Upper Egypt.

The desert coast of the Mediterranean, between Gaza, the frontier town of Palestine, and Pelusium, or Shur, the frontier town of Egypt, was called by the Hebrews, the Desert of Shur. It was thinly peopled by a race of Arabs, named Amalekites, who were conquered by Solomon, and the dominions of the Hebrew kings thus stretched to the very banks of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. By making himself master of the Edomites, who held the desert country between Judea and the Red Sea, Solomon was also able to command the route to a southern port, and thus to increase his trade with Southern Arabia. He took possession of Ezion-geber, a little port at the head of the Elamitic, or eastern gulf of the Red Sea, and which more naturally belonged to the Egyptians, and there he fitted out a fleet of ships for the southern trade.

Hiram, king of Tyre, furnished him with ship-builders, and his vessels, which were of a size and class hitherto unknown on the Red Sea, were manned by Tyrian sailors. The object of these vessels was to carry on a trade with the African coast. The sailors crept along the Egyptian and Nubian shore to Abyssinia, bartering as they went, and their progress was so slow that three years must have been passed in the outward and homeward voyages, including the time which was spent in the exchange of goods at the farthest place of their destination. They brought back chiefly gold from Ophir—probably the town afterwards known as the Golden Berenice—together with precious stones and ebony. Silver and ivory from the African coasts, with apes and parrots from Abyssinia, were also amongst their articles of commerce, and these being all brought to Ezion-geber, were sent through Petra to

Jerusalem and Tyre. The effect upon Upper Egypt of this trade must have been most injurious. Hitherto these costly articles had been brought down the Nile from Ethiopia, and the cities on that river had in consequence increased in wealth and importance; now the Jewish and Tyrian Kings received their riches through a new channel, and the trade on the Nile consequently decreased, until the commerce of Egypt was concentrated in the Delta, and the sea coast of the Mediterranean. Solomon, as we learn from Scripture, received from these voyages a weight of gold equal in worth to two millions of pounds sterling.

The close of Solomon's reign gave indications of the weakness and internal divisions which were so soon to be followed by the disruption of his kingdom. Hadad, King of Edom, and Rezon of Damascus, were stirred up against him as a punishment for his idolatry; but the enemy whom he had the greatest cause to dread as a foe to his family, was Jeroboam, the prefect over the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who had already been pointed out, by the prophet Ahijah, as the man destined to rend from his successor the fairest portion of his kingdom. In his jealousy at this prophecy, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam. "And Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak, King of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon." (1 Kings xi. 40.) If Shishak was indeed the father-in-law of Solomon, this circumstance may at first sight appear perplexing, for Jeroboam seems to have taken refuge at his court with full confidence in his protection. But it would scarcely seem a far-fetched reason for a change of feeling between the Hebrew and Egyptian monarchs, if we were to attribute it in some degree to the conduct which had already brought upon Solomon the judgments of God. The respect and affection evinced by the Jewish king to his Egyptian wife at

the early period of their marriage, are in strong contrast to the degradation of those later days when, although acknowledged as the chief, she was still but one amongst innumerable wives. We can hardly believe that such an alteration in position would have been received with equanimity by a princess of Egypt, a country in which by custom, if not by law, only one wife was permitted, even to the king; but, however this may be, it would certainly seem from Scripture that the alliance between the Hebrew and Egyptian monarchs had ceased before the flight of Jeroboam, and was not renewed during the lifetime of Solomon. Upon his death, Jeroboam returned to Palestine, and having excited the Jews to rebellion, succeeded in securing to himself the allegiance of ten tribes, whilst two remained faithful to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon.

For more than four years after this division, Rehoboam reigned in peace over Judah and Benjamin, but at the end of that time, the invasion of Shishak's Egyptian army, consisting of twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, besides "people without number that came with him out of Egypt," brought him a yet greater degree of humiliation. "Shishak," as we are told in the second Book of Chronicles, "took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem. Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah that were gathered together at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hands of Shishak. Whereupon the princes of Israel and the King humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD is righteous. And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some

deliverance; and My wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know My service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries." (2 Chron. xii. 8.) In accordance with this prophecy Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Egyptians. The treasures of the Temple, and of the king's palace were carried away—three hundred shields of beaten gold being a portion of the spoil,—and the weak and unfortunate King of Judah, robbed of the wealth which his father had accumulated, could but replace them by brazen shields, which were allowed to be used only at stated times, when the king went into the House of the Lord.

The revolting tribes, under Jeroboam, appear to have continued in alliance with Egypt, and the connection between them is supposed to be shown in the idolatry which Jeroboam then established. As the Jews had worshipped the golden calf in the Desert, thus recalling the worship paid to the sacred ox of Heliopolis, so Jeroboam likewise set up two golden calves at the two extremities of his kingdom, Dan in the north, and Bethel in the south, and by that act gained for himself the title which has clung to him from generation to generation, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."

The plunder of Jerusalem by Shishak is correctly depicted in the hall of the temple at Karnac, and the name of "Yuda Melehi," of kingdom of Judah, occurs in the long list of captured districts and towns put up by Shishak to commemorate his success.

It is this monarch, called by Herodotus, Asychis, who is supposed to have permitted a debtor to raise money by pledging the body of his father, upon the condition that neither the person who owed the money, nor any of his children, should receive the rights of sepulture so long as the debt remained.

The Egyptian legends also state that Shishak, being desirous of surpassing his predecessors upon the throne, left, as a monument of his reign, a pyramid made of brick, on which was the following inscription, cut in stone: "Despise me not in comparison with the Pyramids of stone, for I surpass them all, as much as Jupiter surpasses the other gods. A pole was plunged into a lake, and the mud which clave thereto was gathered, and bricks were made of the mud, and so I was formed."



CHAPTER XI.

EGYPTIAN HISTORY, ILLUSTRATED BY THE PROPHECIES—B.C. 734—604.

THE deeds of the successors of Shishak, or Sheshonk, offer very little of interest. The Egyptian legends give the histories of several kings, but the names found on the monuments are much more numerous.

The period appears to have been one of general weakness and civil war, of which the Ethiopians, who had for some years been subject to Egypt, took advantage to make themselves independent. The Prophet Isaiah thus describes the state of the country, "I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians, saith the Lord, and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbours, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom." (Chap. xix. 2.) Tanis, called by the Hebrew writers, Zoan, about this time rose into great importance. It was forty miles to the north of Bubastis, which had been the chief Egyptian city during the reign of Shishak. Zoan was a small town, but its sovereign priests made themselves independent during this period of anarchy. They were even sometimes masters of Thebes, and sometimes fought against Judea. In the Hebrew writings of the period Lower Egypt is called the plains of Zoan. Thebes suffered severely on its conquest by the kings of the Delta. In the words of the prophet Nahum, who wrote more than two centuries later, "Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity; her young

children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains." (Nahum iii. 10.) The wealth of Tanis and the other cities on the eastern side of the Delta arose from their foreign trade, which was carried on for them by the seafaring people of Tyre, Sidon and Tarsis; for the Egyptians, though they made great use of their own river, had no timber with which to build strong ships, and had beside a religious dread of the ocean. The Phœnician vessels were small, and able to run up the shallow eastern streams of the Nile; and the merchants, having bought the corn, linen and drugs of Egypt, sold them in Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor, and even in the more distant parts of the Mediterranean. The Prophet Isaiah alludes to this trade when he says of Zidon, "the harvest of the river is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations." (xxiii. 3.) But even then, when the Egyptian commerce was most flourishing, and Tanis and Bubastis were in the height of their prosperity, their fate was foretold by the prophet of Judah. "The waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up. And they shall turn the rivers far away, and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither. The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more. The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish. Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net-works, shall be confounded. And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish." (ix. 5—10.) Slowly, but surely, by the working of God's providence in nature was this prophecy fulfilled. The waters of the Nile,

which had brought wealth to the eastern half of the Delta, gradually ebbed away, and Bubastis and Tanis were left, like wrecked ships, stranded on a sand-bank, whilst the foreign vessels, finding the deepest water in the Canopic branch of the river, carried their wealth and their commerce to Sais, the capital of the western Delta.

This change, although brought about by degrees, appears to have been fully completed in the reign B.C. 734 of Bocchoris the Wise, about which period the foundation of Rome took place. The reputation of Bocchoris is great as a lawgiver. Many mild laws have been attributed to him, which perhaps are of more modern date. Amongst them may be mentioned the decree—that no person should be imprisoned for debt, and that no debt should be claimed without an acknowledgment in writing, if the debtor denied it, on oath. Bocchoris was the son of the prince who put up on the temple of Amun, at Thebes, a record containing a curse against Menes, the earliest known king of Egypt, for having taught the Egyptians habits of luxury.

The prophecies of woe to the princes of Egypt which accompanied the predictions of the failing of the waters of the Nile were fulfilled about the same time as the latter. Egypt was invaded by Sabaco, an Ethiopian king, and as there was no union amongst the different cities they were soon conquered. So had Isaiah foretold: "The Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord, and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts... Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish; how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?... The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof." (Isaiah xix. 11-13.)

The account of this conquest is given by Herodotus in a legend related to him by the Egyptian priests, which, however, is manifestly inconsistent, and which represents the deposed monarch not as Bocchoris the Wise, but as a blind prince named Anysis. In the reign of this prince, so Herodotus was told, "Egypt was invaded by a vast army of Ethiopians, led by Sabaeos, their king. The blind Anysis fled away to the marsh-country, and the Ethiopian was lord of the land for fifty years, during which his mode of rule was the following: When an Egyptian was guilty of an offence his plan was, not to punish him with death; instead of so doing, he sentenced him, according to the nature of his crime, to raise the ground to a greater or less extent in the neighbourhood of the city to which he belonged. Thus the cities came to be even more elevated than they were before. . . . The Ethiopian finally quitted Egypt, by a hasty flight, under the following circumstances: He saw in his sleep a vision; a man stood by his side, and counselled him to gather together all the priests of Egypt and cut every one of them asunder. On this, according to the account which he himself gave, it came into his mind that the gods intended hereby to lead him to commit an act of sacrilege, which would be sure to draw down upon him some punishment either at the hands of gods or men. So he resolved not to do the deed suggested to him, but rather to retire from Egypt, as the time during which it was fated that he should hold the country had now (he thought) expired. For before he left Ethiopia he had been told by the oracles which are venerated there that he was to reign fifty years over Egypt. The years were now fled, and the dream had come to trouble him; he therefore of his own accord withdrew from the land.

"As soon as Sabaeo was gone, the blind king left the marshes and resumed the government. He had lived in

the marsh-region the whole time, having formed for himself an island, there by a mixture of earth and ashes. While he remained, the natives had orders to bring him food unbeknown to the Egyptians; and latterly, at his request, each man had brought him with the food a certain quantity of ashes."

Herodotus was also told that no one was able to discover the site of this island for more than seven hundred years. It appears, however, to have stood at the south-east corner of the lake Butô.

After the deposition of Bocchoris several kings of the Ethiopian family reigned in Egypt, and two bore the name of Sabaco. Which of them was the same with So, or Savá, mentioned in the Second Book of Kings—(xvii. 4)—is doubtful, but one was certainly the contemporary of Hosea, King of Israel, who refused the annual tribute which he had engaged to pay to Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, and sent messengers to make an alliance with Sabaco. Trust in Egypt was, however, only a delusive hope, and the Assyrian monarch speedily invaded Palestine, whilst the Egyptians were unable to offer any help to the unfortunate country.

Many of the Israelites, however, with their usual wilfulness, still persisted in taking refuge in Egypt from the coming storm, notwithstanding the warning given by the prophet Hosea that they would never return to their homes: "Lo, said the prophet, they are gone because of destruction. Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles." (ch. ix. 6.) The Assyrian invasion of Shalmaneser ended in the captivity of Hosea and his people, who were carried away to the country of their conquerors, and placed "in Halah and in Habor, by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." (2 Kings xvii. 6.)

Another Egyptian prince of the Ethiopian B. C. 690. dynasty, Tirhakah, the contemporary of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, is also mentioned in Scripture. That his reign was brilliant is evident from the records on his monuments at Thebes and other places, and from the remains of a great temple which he enlarged and beautified in his Ethiopian capital.

It would appear from the history of Herodotus that a priest-king named Sethos was at the same time ruling, though probably only as a subordinate governor, in Lower Egypt. Sethos, even after he was raised to power, was apparently more solicitous for the observance of religious ceremonies than for the welfare of the state; and considering the services of the soldiers unnecessary for the security of a country entrusted to the protection of the gods, he treated that class with extreme contempt, and amongst other indignities deprived them of the lands which had in former years been allowed to each soldier by way of reward. This caused great disaffection amongst the troops, and the country was in consequence liable at every moment to fall a prey to any powerful invader.

The neighbouring kingdom of Judah was at this time under the rule of Hezekiah, one of the few Jewish monarchs remarkable for piety. Hezekiah, like his predecessors, depended in some measure for support upon Egypt, but the unwarlike condition of Lower Egypt appears to have been well known to the Assyrians—at least if we may judge from the tone of mockery in which Rabshakeh, the Assyrian general, who was sent to besiege Jerusalem, alluded to Hezekiah's Egyptian alliance. When the proud Assyrian addressed the ambassadors whom the Jewish king sent to treat with him, it was in these words: "Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the King of Assyria, what confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest (but they are

but vain words) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now in whom dost thou trust that thou rebellest against me? Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which, if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it; so is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, unto all that trust in him." (11 Kings xviii. 19, 20, 21.)

In the extremity of his danger, Hezekiah turned from earthly help and trusted himself solely to the protection of the Almighty, and aid was promised, and sent him in the hour of utmost need. Rabshakeh was dispatched to Jerusalem, and Sennacherib threatened Lower Egypt, but Tirhakah himself advanced to oppose him. The Assyrian forces were thus occupied with this new enemy, and Jerusalem was for the time saved.

But there was still cause to fear for the future. Sennacherib sent warnings to Hezekiah, reminding him that the gods of other nations had been unable to save their worshippers from utter destruction, and scornfully adding, "and shalt thou be delivered?" And again the Jewish king had recourse to prayer, which was speedily and wonderfully answered.

The Assyrian army was then confronting the forces of Sethos, at Pelusium, the frontier city of Lower Egypt, towards Syria and Arabia. If Egypt were conquered, the ruin of Palestine would be inevitable. But it came to pass that "the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand, and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." (Isaiah xxxvii. 36.) The Egyptian version of this event, as given to Herodotus by the priests, is very singular. Sennacherib, whom they called King of the Arabians and Assyrians, having, it is said, "marched his vast army into Egypt, the warriors one and all refused to come to the aid of Sethos.

On this, greatly distressed, Sethos entered into the inner sanctuary, and before the image of the god Ptah, or Vulcan, bewailed the fate which impended over him. As he wept he fell asleep, and dreamt that the god came and stood at his side, bidding him be of good cheer and go boldly forth to meet the Arabian host which would do him no hurt, as he himself would send those who should help him. Sethos then, relying on the dream, collected such of the Egyptians as were willing to follow him, who were none of them warriors, but traders, artizans and market people, and with these marched to Pelusium, which commands the entrance into Egypt, and there pitched his camp. As the two armies lay here opposite one another, there came in the night a multitude of field-mice, which devoured all the quivers and bow-strings of the enemy, and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning they commenced their flight, and great multitudes fell, as they had no arms with which to defend themselves."

Herodotus adds, "there stands to this day in the temple of Vulcan a stone statue of Sethos, with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect, "Look on me and learn to reverence the gods." But if any particular reverence was really paid to mice at Memphis, it probably arose from the fact that they were considered emblems of the principle of production, and even thought by some to be endowed with prophetic power. Such reverence was not confined to Egypt. The people of Troas are said to have revered mice because they gnawed the bow-strings of their enemies; and Apollo, who was called Smintheus, from a Greek word signifying "a mouse," was represented on coins of Alexandria Troas with a mouse in his hand.

Whilst engaged in the siege of Pelusium, the Assyrians employed a fleet of Phœnician vessels, or ships of Tarsus,

to meet the land-forces with timber which was cut on mount Lebanon, and put on board the ships at the city of Tyre. Sennacherib himself boasted that he had "come up to the height of the mountains to the sides of Lebanon; and would cut down the tall cedar trees thereof and the choice fir trees thereof." (2 Kings xix.²³.) But their timber ships were, like the land forces, destroyed; and the Hebrew Psalmist, when, in the 48th Psalm, he describes the preservation of Jerusalem, and the trouble and fear of the kings who were assembled against it, thanks God for also "breaking the ships of Tarshish with an east wind."



CHAPTER XII.

THE DODECARCHY AND THE LEGEND OF PHAMME-
TICHRUS.—B.C. 664—610.

UP to this time the Egyptians appear to have had little or no intercourse with European nations, although Greece and Egypt were probably aware of each other's existence as far back as the sixteenth century before Christ. There are passages in the works of the Greek poet Homer, which show that he had often heard of Egypt and the Nile, and the magnificent city of Thebes; and it has even been supposed that some of the Greek states were founded by Egyptians; but it was not till about 700 years before the birth of our Saviour that any frequent and regular intercourse took place between the two countries. The circumstances which led to this intercourse are connected with a strange legendary portion of Egyptian history transmitted to us by Herodotus.

After the death of Sethos, the Egyptians, it is said, divided the country into twelve parts, governed by twelve kings, who formed what was called the Dodecarchy. These princes were united by intermarriages, and by the ties of strict friendship, and entered into an agreement by which each bound himself not to attempt the subversion of the others, nor to seek in any way to acquire a larger territory than he already possessed. This covenant was especially intended to guard against the fulfilment of an oracle, which had declared that whoever amongst them should offer a libation from a brazen bowl in the temple of Pthah was to be king of all Egypt.

The twelve kings continued for some time to reign peaceably and justly, their perfect concord being evinced in their religious worship, for they were accustomed to sacrifice together in the temples of the gods. One day, as they were worshipping in the temple of Pthah, and were about to offer a libation, on the last day of the high festival, the high priest by mistake brought out eleven instead of twelve of the golden bowls which were generally used by the kings in their libations. Psammetichus, the prince who happened to stand last, took off the brazen helmet which he wore, and without any thought of evil held it out to be used instead of the golden bowl. But this accidental circumstance immediately suggested to the minds of the other monarchs the fulfilment of the oracle—"He who should offer a libation from a brazen bowl, was to be sole king of Egypt." Psammetichus, therefore, became from that moment an object of suspicion. Death he certainly did not deserve, for his action had been wholly unpremeditated, yet it seemed dangerous to allow him any longer an equal share with the other kings in the government of the country, and, being divested of his royal dignity, he was banished to the marshes, and forbidden to have any intercourse with the rest of Egypt. Full of indignation, Psammetichus applied to the oracle of the goddess Buto, in the town of Buto, in Lower Egypt, and inquired how he should avenge himself of his persecutors. Buto was an Egyptian divinity, supposed to have been the nurse of the children of Osiris and Isis—and her oracle was considered the truest in Egypt. The answer given to the question of Psammetichus was, that vengeance should come from the sea, when men of brass should appear. There was little hope for Psammetichus in this answer, and he greatly mistrusted it. Not long after, however, a party of Ionian and Carian pirates, belonging to the Greek colonies in Asia Minor, were compelled by a

great storm to land on the coast of Egypt. They wore brazen armour, and endeavoured to support themselves by ravaging the plains. Intelligence of this fact was brought to the dethroned king by an Egyptian, who had never before seen men clad in brass. Psammetichus perceived that the oracle was about to be accomplished. By liberal promises he invited the Greeks to join him, and, collecting around him the Egyptians who were favourable to his cause, he overthrew his enemies, and made himself sole king of Egypt. When established on the throne, he showed his gratitude to the Ionians and Carians by assigning them land on the banks of the Nile, a little below Bubastis.

The twelve kings whose history was thus given to Herodotus were, in all probability, twelve nomarchs, or chiefs of provinces in Lower Egypt, for it is unquestionable that Tirhakah, at this period, extended his rule over all the principal places in Egypt.

Yet Psammetichus I. certainly succeeded B. C. 664. Tirhakah, and it is discovered from the monumental records that he married the daughter of an Ethiopian king; a union which seems to have put an end to the rule of the Ethiopian dynasty, and to have re-established a line of native monarchs. Neither is there any doubt that one of the first measures of Psammetichus was to secure the frontiers of Egypt from foreign invasion, and that with this view he accepted the services of some Greek soldiers, a circumstance which excited the jealousy of the native troops; their dissatisfaction being increased by the marked preference shown the Greeks on all occasions. War having broken out between Egypt and Assyria, Psammetichus laid siege to Azotus, or Ashdod, in Palestine. This city had previously been under the dominion of Egypt, but was at that time subject to Assyria, for, as we are told by the prophet Isaiah (xx. 1.), a general or

Tartan had been sent by "Sargon, king of Assyria," and had taken Ashdod. The prisoners carried away captive on that occasion are expressly mentioned as being Ethiopians and Egyptians, which is exactly in accordance with the fact that the Ethiopians were then supreme in Egypt.

The siege of Ashdod by Psammetichus is said to have lasted twenty-nine years, but this is a very improbable statement, although the city must have been remarkably strong, the very name Ashdod signifying strength.

The Egyptian troops were already, as it has been said, excited and discontented when at the taking of Ashdod they received the additional affront of being placed in the left wing, whilst the Greeks occupied the post of honour on the right, and they then broke out into open revolt. Quitting the camp they united with the rest of the army in Egypt, which had also become disaffected in consequence of being detained beyond the usual period of service, and the joint forces marched to Elephantine, a little island in the Nile, strongly garrisoned as being the frontier station of Egypt towards Ethiopia. The soldiers of Elephantine followed the example of their comrades, and the whole army withdrew into Ethiopia. Psammetichus sent to recall them to their duty, but in vain. He then followed them himself as far as Elephantine, and despatched some of the Greeks, with his most faithful Egyptian adherents, to persuade them to return. The friends of Psammetichus having overtaken the rebels, conjured them in the most solemn manner not to leave their country, their wives, and their families; but the soldiers, deaf to these entreaties, continued their march into Upper Ethiopia, where they received the welcome which they expected from the friendship subsisting between the Ethiopians and Egyptians. Out of regard, however, for the family alliance of the Ethiopian king with Psammetichus, the

fugitive troops were removed far from the Egyptian frontiers, and settled beyond Meroë, in certain lands allotted to them by the Ethiopian monarch, where their descendants long continued to live, retaining their distinguishing characteristics of "strangers." The fact of this desertion is confirmed by an inscription discovered upon some rocks in Nubia, and which must have been made by the Greek soldiers on their return from their fruitless expedition. Part of it is as follows:—"King Psammetichus having come to Elephantine, those who were with Psammetichus, the son of Theocles, wrote this. They sailed and came to Kerkis, to where the river rises."

Herodotus tells us that the services of the Greek soldiers were rewarded by having assigned to them, as abodes, two places opposite to each other, one on either side of the Nile, which received the name of "the Camps." And he adds that Psammetichus intrusted to their care certain Egyptian children to be taught Greek. These boys afterwards became useful as interpreters or, as they would now be called, Dragomans.

After this time, the Greeks began to be better acquainted with the history, philosophy, and customs of the Egyptians. It is surprising, however, that they have not given us more information respecting a country which they considered so interesting. But, with all their love of inquiry, and their enterprising qualities, they were not behind the Egyptians in prejudice against foreigners, whom they looked upon as "barbarians."

Psammetichus next turned his attention to the internal state of Egypt. He contributed greatly to the embellishment of the temples in Thebes and other cities; and at Memphis he built a magnificent edifice for the bull Apis, where he was kept when publicly exhibited.

The sepulchres of Apis, near Memphis, also began at this period to assume more importance and extent, and in consequence of the encouragement given to art by

Psammetichus, and his immediate successors, a great improvement took place in the execution and high finish of the Egyptian sculptures.

A curious legend is related of an endeavour made by Psammetichus to discover which was the most ancient nation upon earth. Until his reign, the Egyptians imagined that this dignity belonged to themselves; but the king was desirous to test the truth of the belief. With this view, he commanded two infants, the children of poor parents, to be shut up in a hovel, which was kept constantly closed, except on the occasion of the entrance of a shepherd or, as others say, nurses, whose tongues were cut out. The shepherd whose duty it was to feed the infants with goat's milk, was commanded not to suffer any other person to enter the hut, and was himself forbidden to speak even a single word in the hearing of the children. At the expiration of two years, as the shepherd was one day entering the hut to feed the children, they both extended their hands towards him, crying out "*becos becos*." When this first happened, the herdsman took no notice, but afterwards, when he observed, on coming often to see them, that the word was constantly repeated, he informed his king of the circumstance. Psammetichus sent for the children, who in his presence began to stammer out the same sounds. Enquiry was made as to what nation used this word, and it was found that it was the term by which the inhabitants of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, designated bread, and from this time the Phrygians were allowed the honour of antiquity. It has been remarked that the children might have learnt the sound from the cry of the goats, whose milk was their food; but it was probably merely one of the two primitive sounds (*pa* and *ma*), naturally made by children, and which have been the origin of the names given to parents in the earliest known languages.

It was in the reign of Psammetichus that the Medes,

the Assyrians, the Jews, and indeed all the rest of Asia, were startled at learning that a large army of Scythians was pouring down from Tartary, over the cultivated plains of the South—no force could check their march, and they spread in every direction over the whole country. One body marched straight towards Egypt, crossing Mesopotamia, and meeting no resistance from Josiah, who then reigned in Judea. When they reached the Egyptian frontier, Psammetichus was able, by the means of gifts, prayers and threats, to turn them towards the coast of Palestine, and Egypt escaped from this band of roving Tartars, frightened, but unharmed.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE EGYPTIAN DOMINION IN JUDEA AND ITS DOWN-
FALL.—B.C. 610—560.

B. C. 610. PSAMMETICHUS was succeeded by his son Necho, called in Scripture, Pharaoh Necho. This prince encouraged naval enterprises, and attempted to open a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea, which had originally been made by Remeses II. The account of the undertaking, as given to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests, was that Necho began it, but put a stop to it when it was half completed, on account of an oracle which declared that he was working for a barbarian, or, in other words, that he was opening a passage by which foreigners might enter the country. One hundred and twenty thousand workmen were declared to have perished while engaged in the work. In after years, when Egypt was subject to Persia, the canal was completed, and open for large vessels, and traces of it may be seen at the present day. A project for the reconstruction of a similar work has within a few years been set on foot.

Another remarkable evidence of the encouragement given by Pharaoh Necho to naval affairs is to be found in a voyage said to have been made, in consequence of his orders, by some Phœnician sailors round Africa. In an age when the compass was not known, this voyage was adventurous and wonderful. By it the first proof was given that Africa is surrounded by the sea, except where it is connected by the isthmus with Asia. Psammetichus sent out sailors and ships, ordering that they should return by the Pillars of

Hercules (now the Straits of Gibraltar), to the Mediterranean and Egypt. The Phœnicians sailed down the Red Sea into the Southern Ocean, and when the autumn arrived they landed on the coast which happened to be near, sowed corn, waited for the harvest, and after reaping the corn, embarked again and continued their voyage. This course they continued three years, and at length returned to Egypt by the Pillars of Hercules, as they had been directed. They stated that, whilst sailing round Africa, the sun was on their right hand, a clear evidence of the truth of their narrative, for when they had passed the equator the sun must have appeared to them in the north, or on their right hand side.

This voyage in the reign of Psammetichus took place two thousand years before Vasco de Gama, the Portuguese navigator, found out the very same way to sail to India, round the Cape of Good Hope.

Herodotus tells us that Pharaoh Necho, "when he gave up the construction of the canal, turned all his thoughts to war, and set to work to build a fleet." He also, it is said, "made war by land on the Syrians, and defeated them in a pitched battle at Megiddu (or Megiddo); after which he made himself master of Cadytis (supposed to be Gaza), a large city of Syria." A more detailed account of this expedition is given us in the Bible. Syria and Palestine were at that time tributary to Babylon, and Pharaoh Necho, in invading the former country, was therefore warring against the Babylonian monarch, his intention being to capture Carchemish on the Euphrates. Josiah, king of Judah, wishing probably to ingratiate himself with the Babylonians, ventured to oppose him. The utter hopelessness of the attempt is described by the expression in the Second Book of Kings (xxiii. 29.) "Pharaoh Necho slew him at Megiddu,

when he had seen him." The Egyptian monarch pursued his victorious course, and having taken Carchemish, and left a strong garrison within its walls, returned to Egypt through Palestine. On arriving at Jerusalem, he deposed Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, and carried him prisoner to Egypt, placing his brother Jehoiakim on the Jewish throne in his stead, and compelling the Jews at the same time to pay a tribute of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

But the triumph of Egypt over Babylon was not to be of long duration. Nabopolassar, who was then King of Babylon, finding himself unable by reason of his age and infirmities to carry on the war himself, gave the command of his armies to his son, Nabuchodonosor, or Nebuchadnezzar. Four years after the taking of Carchemish, the power of Pharaoh Necho was completely overthrown by the young Babylonian prince. The Egyptian army was defeated near the river Euphrates, Carchemish was recovered by the Babylonians, the revolted provinces were reduced, and the Egyptians finally dispossessed of all they had taken, which included Syria and Palestine. This destruction of the Egyptian power was prophesied by Jeremiah when the word of the Lord came to him, "Against the Gentiles, against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates, in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah King of Judah. Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle. Harness the horses, and get up ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets; furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines. Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back, for fear was round about saith the Lord. Let not the swift flee away, nor the

mighty man escape: they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates." (Jer. xvi. 2—6.)

Another warning was added by the prophet, the cry, as it were, of a further calamity which was to befall Egypt; but Pharaoh Necho was laid in the grave with-

out witnessing it; and Psammis, or Psammetichus II., his son, who succeeded him, enjoyed a

B. C. 594. reign of nearly six years of comparative peace, for it was disturbed only by an expedition into Ethiopia, shortly after which he died. Only one anecdote is related of Psammis. It is said that during his reign ambassadors arrived from the Eleans, the inhabitants of Elis, a small Grecian state, in which the Olympic games were celebrated. They boasted of having established these games under the most just regulations that could by any possibility be made. The Egyptians—the wisest of mankind—could not, so said the ambassadors, invent any to surpass them. The King of Egypt was however to examine and decide whether the boast was true. Psammis collected a council of wise men, and the Eleans were then asked whether their own citizens were permitted to enter the lists. The reply was that all the Grecians who wished to contend were allowed to do so. "Then," replied the Egyptian sages, "you have in your enactments totally deviated from the laws of justice, for you cannot contrive any rules which shall prevent favour being shown to your own citizens, to the prejudice of strangers. If you really wish to make just regulations, you must establish games for foreign candidates and allow no Eleans to enter the lists."

Apries, the son of Psammis, was the same monarch B. C. 586. who is called in the Scriptures Pharaoh Hophra.

His character seems to have been singularly arrogant, for we are told that it was his belief that not even a god could deprive him of his kingdom;

and Ezekiel speaks of him as looking upon the greatness of his country as owing only to himself. This self complacency was probably increased, if not engendered, by the success which attended him in the early part of his reign. The kingdom of Judah was at this time fast sinking to its ruin. The country had been again and again overcome by the Babylonians, and many of the Jews, contrary to the Divine command, had sought refuge in Egypt. Apries, taking advantage of the disturbed state of Palestine, strove to re-establish the Egyptian power in that country and in Syria. He made an alliance with Zedekiah, King of Judah, and succeeded so far as to make himself master of Tyre, Sidon and Cyprus, besides compelling the Babylonians to retire from Jerusalem. But his acquisitions were not lasting. The Babylonians were destined by God to be the conquerors, not only of Palestine, but of Egypt; and the Jews were warned by their prophets not to trust to their Egyptian ally. Ezekiel especially was commanded thus to address the proud Apries: "Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against thee Pharaoh, King of Egypt; the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. . . . I am against thee and against thy river, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. . . . Behold I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be for the wages of his army." (Ezekiel xxix. 3, 10, 19.) Further particulars of the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar are given by the prophet in the succeeding chapters. But Herodotus, who gained his information from the priests, does not mention it. It seems to have been the object of the priests to pass over,

if possible, every fact which tended to lessen the glory of their country; and the following account given by them of the events which ended in the ruin of Apries have no reference to the Babylonian invasion.

A number of Greeks, so Herodotus was told, had been invited by the people of Cyrene, in Africa, to assist them in colonising the adjacent country of Libya, and the Greeks were encouraged to accept this proposal by an oracle which said: "He that is backward to share in the pleasant Libyan acres, sooner or later, I warn him, will feel regret at his folly."

The former settlers in Libya, finding themselves interfered with by the new colonists, applied for support to Apries, or Pharaoh Hophra, King of Egypt. A large army of Egyptians was assembled, and Cyrene was invaded. The country alone might have been an attraction to Apries, for it was one of the most lovely and fertile on the face of the earth. The centre was an elevated table land, the edge of which ran parallel to the coast. From the table land to the sea the land sloped in a succession of green and fruitful terraces, intersected by mountain streams. The air was cooled by sea breezes from the north, and the mountains which lay behind it sheltered it from the sands and heated winds of the desert to the south. The choicest fruits, the rarest plants, vegetables, and flowers flourished in this enchanting country; but the rich abundance tended to enervate the inhabitants, and the Cyrenians were in consequence prone to luxury. The people against whom Apries had now undertaken to make war were Greeks as well as Cyrenians, and the Greeks were as brave and energetic and hardy as the Cyrenians were the reverse. Apries did not understand this; he despised his enemies, and the result was a defeat so complete that only a small portion of his great army returned to Egypt to tell the story of their disgrace.

The effect upon the minds of the people was most disastrous to Apries. Discontent and suspicion were aroused. The king, it was said, had wilfully sacrificed his army; he had led them into dangers against which he knew they were not able to contend, hoping that afterwards he might govern Egypt with greater security.

Open revolt was the natural consequence of this universal distrust. The Egyptians, and especially the native soldiers, rose in arms, and Apries, who had once been so confident that not even a god could dethrone him, was compelled to send Amasis, one of his friends and servants, to endeavour, if possible, to appease the rebels. Amasis was a man of low birth and of indifferent character, for he is stated to have been several times convicted of theft,—but he was clever and prudent, and possessed the affections of the soldiers and the people of Egypt. He departed on his mission with apparently a sincere desire of carrying out the wishes of the king. Having obtained an interview with the rebels, he endeavoured to restrain their indignation, and began to urge them to desist from their enterprise; but whilst he was speaking one of the Egyptians standing behind him placed a helmet on his head, and as he did so said that he thereby crowned him king.

The action was in accordance with the ambitious designs which were probably already working in the mind of Amasis. It signified also the wishes of the people, and the insurgents having actually agreed to make him their king, he prepared to lead an army against his former master. When information of this treachery was brought to Apries, he immediately gave orders to Patarbémis, one of his courtiers, and a man of high rank, to go to the place where Amasis then was, and bring him alive into his presence. Patarbémis prepared to obey, and on his arrival urged the rebellious chief to return to his sove-

reign. Amasis replied that "this was exactly what he had long been intending to do. Apries would have no reason to complain of him on the score of delay; he would shortly come himself to the king and bring others with him." The meaning of this speech was obvious, and Patarbémis, seeing the preparations for war which were making all around him, repaired in haste to Apries to inform him of the unsatisfactory result of his errand. A terrible fate awaited him. The impetuous and tyrannical king, seeing his ambassador return without the prisoner whom he expected, allowed no time for explanation, but, in a transport of passion, commanded the ears and nose of the unfortunate Patarbémis to be cut off.

This act of cruelty completed the disaffection of the people and the ruin of Apries. The Egyptians who up to that time had adhered to their lawful monarch, without a moment's delay, joined Amasis; and the king, utterly deserted by his own subjects, could rely upon no help but that of the foreign soldiers whom he had incorporated into his army. Thirty thousand Greeks were still under his command, and with this support he hoped to regain his kingdom, of which almost all that remained to him was his spacious and magnificent palace in the city of Sais, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt, and the place to which the kings of his dynasty, dating from Psammetichus, originally belonged.

The contending armies met near the city of Memphis, in Lower Egypt. The Greek soldiers fought bravely, but the native troops under Amasis being far superior in number, completely defeated them, and when Apries again entered his splendid palace, it was as the prisoner of Amasis. The conqueror treated him at first honorably; he was allowed to reside in the palace, and due regard was paid to his maintenance. But the Egyptians looked upon Apries as their deadly enemy. They complained because his life was preserved, and Amasis

having risen by the will of the people did not dare to oppose them. The unhappy Apries was therefore delivered up to his revengeful subjects, and by them strangled.

This legendary history has but a slight agreement with the events which appear to have actually caused the downfall of Apries, and which really connect it with the Babylonian invasion. It seems that, whilst engaged in the war with the Greeks and Cyrenians, Apries had been obliged to withdraw his army from Jerusalem, which was therefore left without protection. The Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar, besieged it; Zedekiah, the king, was taken prisoner; the people, with the exception of a small number who fled into Egypt, were carried into captivity; and Nebuchadnezzar, having thus subdued Palestine, turned his arms against Egypt.

Besides the testimony of prophecy, the fact that the invasion did take place, although entirely omitted by Herodotus, is directly asserted by two profane historians; and it therefore appears that the tale of the rebellion of Amasis was only used to conceal the truth that Apries, or Hophra, was deposed by the Babylonians.

Before this invasion, however, and whilst Apries was still reigning, the Jews, in their weakness and wilfulness, still looked to Egypt as a place of safety. Johanan, the son of Kareah, who, after the capture of Zedekiah, had failed in an attempt to free his country from the Babylonians, led his little army along the coast of the Mediterranean, and through the Desert towards the borders of Egypt. With him were taken as prisoners Jeremiah, the prophet, and Baruch, the scribe. At the frontier Jeremiah again warned his countrymen to turn back, but, disbelieving his words, and accusing him of being a favourer of the Babylonians, they refused to listen, and entered the Egyptian city of Tahpenes, or Daphne. "Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpenes, saying,

Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick-kiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpenes, in the sight of the men of Judah, and say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel: Behold I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid, and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. And when he cometh he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death, and such as are for captivity to captivity, and such as are for the sword to the sword." (xliii. 10, 11.)

This fearful threat had no effect upon the disheartened fugitives, who being well received by Apries, were allowed to settle in the land of Goshen, between Memphis and the Red Sea. In this part of Egypt so many of their countrymen had already taken refuge that in five cities Hebrew was the language heard in the streets. Such had been the prophecy of Isaiah—"In that day shall five cities of the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of Hosts: one shall be called the city of destruction," or, as it is in the margin, the city of Heres, or of the Sun. (xix. 18.)

It was in one of these towns,—probably either Tahpenes or Heliopolis,—that the prophet Jeremiah wrote his Lamentations, in which some indications may be found of the place of his residence. He likens his sorrow to waters flowing over his head (iii. 54), a simile probably drawn from the inundations of the Nile; and "the tears which run down like a river night and day" (ii. 18), and "the eye running down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughters of his people" (iii. 48), point to the same source of illustration. Great cause indeed had the prophet to sorrow as well for the sins of the fugitives as for the ruin of his country. The conduct of

the Jews when settled in Egypt was in strict accordance with their wilful disobedience in entering it. Obeying their singular tendency to idolatry, they gave themselves up to the superstitions of the country. The women offered incense to the Egyptian gods, and especially to Neith, the queen of heaven; and the men, when solemnly reproved by Jeremiah, and warned that they should not escape in the troubles which were coming upon Egypt, upheld the conduct of their wives, and in the most open and deliberate manner announced their determination to follow the devices of their own hearts.

This settlement of Jews in the neighbourhood of Heliopolis appears to have been only an enlargement of one which had existed there from the earliest times. But when at the period of the Assyrian invasion their number increased, the influence which they exercised became very remarkable. Even language was modified by it; for after a while the Jews in Egypt lost the use of their own language, and adopted in its place the Greek, which was then used by all strangers in the Delta. At the same time they gave some new words to the Egyptians.

Jeremiah says, "And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?" (ch. ii. 18.) Sihor, or blue, was the name given by the Egyptians to their chief river. The Jews first termed it the Nile, or stream, by which they originally meant the shallow Pelusiac branch. The word "river" they reserved for the Euphrates.

It was at this period that the school of learning at Heliopolis was at its height. The Greek, Hebrew, and Egyptian languages were understood there, and persons who came to learn had an opportunity of studying the opinions of the three nations. The Jew, reverencing the law of Moses, here talked both with those who read Homer

and those who interpreted Hieroglyphics. The writings of many a Greek philosopher and Hebrew rabbi took their colour from the school of Heliopolis, and the fame of its students reached, if not far over the globe, at least to the places most noted for the cultivation of learning—Athens and Babylon. An obelisk standing by itself among some low earth-mounds at the village of Mataraeh, near Cairo, and the remains of a temple and priestly college, still mark the spot whence Solon and Pythagoras borrowed their opinions, and where Plato came to learn. The English traveller, on his hurried journey to India, passes by it; but how seldom, probably, does he pause to think of it, as one of those remarkable spots which have been for a time the centre of the world's mind, and the source of scientific and literary inspiration to the civilised nations of the earth.*

The connection between Egypt and Palestine seems to have been chiefly sought by the latter country. The Jews mixed readily with the Egyptians, as with the people nearest akin to themselves; and even the Hebrews of Judea, though they condemned the Hellenistic or foreign Jews for neglecting many ceremonial observances, yet declared that an Egyptian was more closely allied to them than any other foreigner, and acknowledged as part of their law, the regulation that he might be admitted even into the priesthood after his family had obeyed the laws of Moses for three generations.

* Sharpe's History of Egypt.

CHAPTER XIV.

AMASIS AND THE LEGEND OF HERODOTUS—

B. C. 569—525.

THE supposition that Apries, or Pharaoh Hophra, was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar is rendered the more probable from its being proved by the Egyptian monuments that Amasis was not, as Herodotus represents him, a man of low birth, but one of high rank, and that he married the daughter of Psammeticus III., a king whose name appears on the monuments, between Apries and Amasis. The beautiful Theban sarcophagus of the wife of Amasis is now in the British Museum, and her figure, sculptured upon the lid, has the crown of Anun Ra, and the sceptre of Osiris, and bears the name of the goddess Athor; thus she was made a threefold deity in her own person. It

B. C. 569. is most probable that Amasis came to the throne by the intervention of Nebuchadnezzar, for it was a custom amongst Eastern nations, and one of which many instances are given in the Bible at this period, for a conqueror to dethrone the reigning monarch and set up another king, on the condition of paying tribute, an exaction which to the Egyptians must have been the utmost humiliation.

The reign of Amasis is said to have lasted forty-four years. Egypt must at that time have been greatly degraded in the sight of foreign nations by its subjection to Assyria, but its internal condition was prosperous. Yet the character of the king, if the account given by

the priests to Herodotus is to be believed, was not such as to secure the respect of his people. He appears indeed to have been a man of energy and industry, but to have been addicted to low amusements, which excited the displeasure of his friends. He rose, it is said, at dawn, and transacted business diligently till about nine o'clock, but during the remainder of the day he spent his time in drinking and joking with his guests and courtiers, carrying on conversation which was not always strictly decorous. On one occasion a friend who was attached to him ventured to remonstrate on such conduct: "O king, he said, thou dost but ill guard thy royal dignity whilst thou allowest thyself in such levities. Thou shouldest sit in state upon a stately throne, and busy thyself with affairs the whole day long. So would the Egyptians feel that a great man rules them, and thou wouldest be better spoken of. But now thou conductest thyself in no kingly fashion." But Amasis replied, "Bowmen bend their bows when they wish to shoot, and unbrace them when the shooting is over. Were they kept always strung they would break, and fail the archer in time of need. So it is with men. If they give themselves constantly to serious work, and never indulge awhile in pastime or sport, they lose their senses, and become mad or moody. Knowing this, I divide my life between pastime and business."

It was a plausible excuse, but Amasis, according to the Egyptian legends, had exhibited the same low tastes long before he took upon himself the duties of a king. The priests indeed accounted for the reverence which there is no doubt he showed to the temples of the gods by circumstances connected with his degraded conduct before he came to the throne. They said that, at that period of his life, he lived in continual feasts and revelries, and whenever his means failed him, roamed about and robbed people. On such occasions he was frequently

brought, by the person from whom he had stolen, to the nearest oracle, in order that he might be pronounced guilty or innocent. When Amasis afterwards came to the throne, he entirely neglected the temples of the gods who had declared he was not a thief, regarding them as worthless; but the gods who had detected him he honoured exceedingly. Whatever may be the truth of this story, it is certain that Amasis built the beautiful temple of Isis at Memphis, and erected for the temple of Neith, or Minerva, at Saïs, a magnificent court, or propyleum which far excelled any other in size and beauty. Before this he placed, a number of enormous statues, larger than life, and formed an avenue of prodigious sphinxes leading to the main entrance, besides providing certain stones of a most extraordinary size for the repairs. The largest mass of stone was 31 feet, 6 inches long, 22 feet broad, and 12 feet high. It was cut out of a quarry at Elephantine, and three years were occupied in conveying it to Saïs; no fewer than two thousand labourers, all from the class of boatmen, being employed in the task. After all this labour it was never used for the purpose for which it was intended; but was halloed out and made into a chamber, and never placed in its proper position. Herodotus says, that just as the stone had reached the spot where in his days it stood, the architect, considering the length of time occupied in removing it, and being wearied with the heavy toil, heaved a deep sigh which was heard by Amasis. Full of superstition the king regarded it as an omen, and would not allow the chamber to be moved forward any further. Another story told respecting it was, that one of the workmen engaged in working the levers was crushed and killed by the mass, and that after this accident the stone was left where it stood. On another occasion Amasis showed his interest in religious matters by con-

tributing towards the rebuilding of the temple of Delphi in Greece. The expense was greater than the Delphians could bear, and they went from city to city begging for contributions. When they arrived in Egypt the king gave them a thousand talents of alum, an article for which the country was much celebrated. Amasis also made offerings to the gods of various nations. He sent to Cyrene a statue of Minerva covered with plates of gold, and a painted likeness of himself. To the Minerva of Lindus, a city, in the island of Rhodes, he gave two statues in stone, and a linen corslet. Another corslet presented by him to the Lacedemonians is particularly worthy of notice. It was ornamented with numerous figures of animals worked in gold and cotton, and each thread, though very fine, was composed of 360 other threads all distinct. This corslet was carried off by the inhabitants of the island of Samos, and the Lacedemonians were so indignant at the robbery, that it was afterwards made a pretext for war. Such liberality to the Greek temples is the more remarkable, because the Egyptians never admitted into their mythology the gods of their neighbours. The Greeks on the contrary were eager to copy the rites of the Egyptian religion.

Amasis is said to have established a law by which every Egyptian was obliged to appear once a year before the governor of the Nome to which he belonged, and show what were his means of living. If he failed to do this, or could not prove that he obtained a livelihood in an honest manner he was condemned to death. This law, however, probably dates from a much earlier period. In many other respects, Amasis, certainly showed himself a wise monarch. The military researches of Egypt were not neglected by him; he took Cyprus and made it tributary, and entered into a treaty with Croesus, King of Lydia, against Cyrus, King of Persia; and it has been said that he sent Croesus a large body of troops. He also increased the wealth of

Egypt by the attention which he bestowed on commerce. The Greek traders were encouraged to settle in the country, and the king gave them the city of Naucratis, in the Delta, for their residence. To those who only wished to trade upon the coast, and did not desire to remain, he granted lands where they might set up altars and erect temples to the gods. For a long time Naucratis had been the only Egyptian city given up to commerce, and if traders entered any but the Canopic, or most westerly mouth of the Nile, by which alone they could reach Naucratis, they were obliged to turn back, after swearing that they had not come there of their own free will. This extreme precaution seems to have been in a great measure adopted as a safeguard against the Greek pirates, by whom the Mediterranean was infested.

The favour shown to the Greeks by the kings who reigned at Sais brought many travellers from Greece to Egypt, and the intercourse between the two nations tended greatly to increase their mutual civilisation. Thales, the first of those Greek philosophers who received the title of "Wise Men," came to Egypt about this period. He seems to have been chiefly in search of scientific knowledge, and did not forget to inquire into the cause of the inundations of the Nile. He measured the height of the great Pyramid by the length of its shadow, and is said to have been the first to foretell an eclipse. The Egyptians on their part enlarged his mathematical knowledge, and Thales is said to have sacrificed an ox to the gods in token of gratitude for this benefit.

Soon afterwards Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, came to Naucratis as a merchant. He brought the olive oil of Athens to exchange with the corn and other native products of Egypt; and, while carrying on this trade, he studied the manners and customs of the country. Solon had been, in the highest degree, useful to his countrymen

in reforming their laws, and now he was anxious to acquire knowledge which might enable him to benefit them still further. Accordingly, after selling his cargo, or leaving it at Naukratis under the care of an agent, he visited Sais, where he was honourably received, and admitted to free intercourse with the priests of the Temple of Neith, who looked upon the Greeks as the mere children of yesterday, and professed to have a knowledge of the events of the last nine thousand years. Solon returned to Athens with his mind much enlarged, but he had the pain of finding that in his absence his countrymen had lost their zeal for his laws, and that the knowledge he had lately acquired was not likely to be estimated by them as he had anticipated. He introduced the law by which every person was obliged to account to a magistrate for his means of gaining a livelihood in an honest manner; but the penalty of death was not exacted in Athens, as in Egypt, although the offender was liable to punishment.

Cleobulus of Rhodes, and Hecatæus of Miletus, were also amongst the number of learned men who repaired to Egypt at this time. The latter wrote a valuable account of his travels. One of the cities which he visited was Thebes, where the priests showed him the large wooden mummy-cases of their predecessors, to the number of three hundred and forty-five, all standing upright round the walls of the temple. Hecatæus boasted that he was the sixteenth in descent from Jupiter, but the priests declared that those three hundred and forty-five priests had ruled Thebes in succession, from father to son, each mortal, the son of a mortal; whilst before them, the gods Osiris and Horus had been the kings of Egypt. This vaunt was greatly exaggerated, but the Theban priests were then as far removed from the obscurity of antiquity, as are the English in the nineteenth century, and if they had confined themselves to what we have reason to believe

was the truth, their assertion would still have been remarkable, and they could probably have pointed to records, standing around them, which had counted some centuries before Abraham.

Herodotus, besides describing the foreign policy of Amasis, which so greatly influenced the fortune of Egypt, dwells much upon what may be called his private history.

The vicissitudes of human events seemed to have deeply impressed the mind of Amasis, and from them he must have learnt lessons of wisdom, which would otherwise appear inconsistent with his self-indulgent character. A striking instance of his conviction of the instability of human greatness is given in the history of his friendship with Polycrates, the tyrant of the Island of Samos. Polycrates had originally made himself master of Samos by heading an insurrection. He then shared his kingdom with his two brothers, but after some time he killed the elder, and banished the younger, and retained the whole island for himself. His power by degrees greatly increased. He possessed a good fleet, and skilful soldiers, and by their help he plundered his friends as well as his foes, for he argued that a friend was better pleased if you gave him back what you had taken from him, than if you spared him at the first. Many of the neighbouring islands were captured by him, and several towns upon the mainland were also taken. But Polycrates was not only a conqueror, but a wise and prudent ruler. He enriched Samos with the best products of other lands, and introduced breeds of sheep from Attica, goats from the Island of Naxos, pigs from Sicily, and hounds from Laconia and Molossia. Foreign artisans were attracted to his kingdom by the offer of high wages, and his own people were employed in useful and beautiful public works. His chief desire, indeed, seems to have been to gain favour with the lower orders. It is said that when any of his

common soldiers fell in battle, he assigned the care of their bereaved mothers to some of the richer citizens, telling them to regard them as their own mothers; and in order still further to increase his popularity, he was in the habit of lending his rich hangings, and valuable plate, to any one who required it for a wedding feast, or other banquet of more than common importance. Neither did Polycrates neglect to cultivate the alliance of foreign states. The friendship of the King of Egypt was sought by him and obtained, and gifts were interchanged by the two monarchs as a proof of their cordial alliance. After a time, however, the continued success of Polycrates began to disturb the mind of Amasis, and fearing that his friend might be dazzled by such uninterrupted prosperity, he wrote him the following letter:—

"Amasis to Polycrates thus saith: It is a pleasure to hear of a friend and ally prospering, but thy exceeding prosperity does not cause me joy, forasmuch as I know that the gods are envious. My wish for myself and for those I love is, to be now successful, and now to meet with a check—thus passing through life amid alternate good and ill, rather than with perpetual good fortune. For never yet did I hear tell of any one succeeding in all his undertakings who did not meet with calamity at last, and come to utter ruin. Now, therefore, give ear to my words, and meet thy good luck in this way,—Bethink thee which of all thy treasures thou valuest most, and canst least bear to part with; take it, whatsoever it be, and throw it away, so that it may be sure never to come any more into the sight of man. Then, if thy good fortune be not thenceforth chequered with ill, save thyself from harm by again doing as I have counselled." "When Polycrates," as we are told by Herodotus, read this letter, "and perceived that the advice of Amasis was good, he considered carefully with himself which of the treasures

that he had in store it would grieve him most to lose. After much thought, he made up his mind that it was a signet ring which he was wont to wear, an emerald set in gold, the workmanship of Theodore, son of Têlecles, a Samian. So he determined to throw this away; and manning a penteconter," or a ship with fifty rowers on board, "he went and bade the sailors put out into the open sea. When he was now a long way from the island, he took the ring from his finger, and in the sight of all those who were on board flung it into the deep. This done, he returned home and gave vent to his sorrow. Now it happened, five or six days afterwards, that a fisherman caught a fish so large and beautiful that he thought it well deserved to be made a present of to the king. So he took it with him to the gate of the palace, and said that he wanted to see Polycrates. Then Polycrates allowed him to come in, and the fisherman gave him the fish, with these words following: 'Sir king, when I took this prize I thought I would not carry it to market. Though I am a poor man, who live by my trade, I said to myself, it is worthy of Polycrates and his greatness; and so I brought it here to give it to you.' The speech pleased the king, who thus spoke in reply: 'Thou didst right well, friend, and I am doubly indebted both for the gift and for the speech. Come now and sup with me.' So the fisherman went home, esteeming it a high honour that he had been asked to sup with the king. Meanwhile the servants, on cutting open the fish, found the signet of their master in its inside. No sooner did they see it than they seized upon it, and, hastening to Polycrates, with great joy restored it to him, and told him in what way it had been found. The king, who saw something providential in the matter, forthwith wrote a letter to Amasis, telling him all that had happened, what he had himself done, and what had been the upshot, and

despatched the letter to Egypt. When Amasis had read the letter of Polycrates, he perceived that it does not belong to man to save his fellow-man from the fate which is in store for him; likewise he felt certain that Polycrates would end ill, as he prospered in everything, even finding what he had thrown away. So he sent a herald to Samos, and dissolved the contract of friendship. This he did in order that when the great and heavy misfortune came, he might escape the grief which he would have felt if the sufferer had been his bond-friend."

Another reason has been given for the dissolution of the alliance between the two monarchs. Amasis, it is said, deserted Polycrates on account of his injustice to his subjects; whilst it has also been suspected, and with reason, that it was Polycrates, who, with characteristic faithlessness, broke off his friendship with Amasis when he found it suitable to his policy to cultivate the alliance of the Persians. However this may be, it is certain that the forebodings of Amasis were some years afterwards fully realised; for the satrap or governor of Sardis, in Asia Minor, having formed a deadly hatred against Polycrates, contrived, by false pretences, to allure him to the mainland, and then caused him to be arrested and crucified.

Amasis himself must in his latter days have had great cause to dread the downfall of his own power. Egypt was threatened with a Persian invasion, and if the life of the king had been prolonged but a very few years, he would have witnessed that great overthrow of his country which was the complete fulfilment of the Jewish prophecy, for which the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar had prepared the way.

CHAPTER XV.

PERSIAN CONQUEST OF EGYPT—B.C. 525—411.

THE glory of Nebuchadnezzar's empire had been but short-lived. Under his grandson, Belshazzar, Babylon was taken by Cyrus, King of Persia; and Cambyses, the son and successor of Cyrus, was now bent upon adding Egypt to his vast dominions. Great difficulties lay in the way of this undertaking, for the only entrance to Egypt was by the Desert, and the want of water rendered the journey almost impossible to a large army. Cambyses, however, obtained help in his perplexity from a person who was well acquainted with the means by which the obstacles to his enterprise might be overcome. Phanes, a Greek soldier in the service of Amasis, being for some reason dissatisfied with his master, had deserted his service and fled to Cambyses, and now anxious to revenge himself for his real or fancied wrongs, he not only betrayed to the Persian king all the secrets of Amasis, but gave him the best advice as to how the Desert might be crossed. An ambassador was, by his direction, sent to the most powerful Arab sheik to solicit a safe-conduct through the Desert. He was well received, and the Arab chief pledged his faith to him, according to what was then the custom of the Arabs. Two men, wishing to swear a friendship, were accustomed to stand on each side of a third, who with a sharp stone made a cut on the inside of the hand of each near the middle finger. Then, taking a piece from their dress, he dipped it in the blood of each, and moistened with it seven stones, which were placed near

them, calling at the same time on two deities, who were supposed to represent the Sun and Moon. The Arabian chief having thus contracted a solemn alliance with the Persian king, gave him the assistance that was needed to enable him to carry out his project, for he filled a number of camel's skins with water, and having loaded with them all the live camels which he possessed, drove them into the Desert, that they might be ready for the army when it arrived.

Before Cambyses reached Egypt, Amasis B. C. 525. was dead, but Psammenitus, his son, succeeded to the throne, and his army, stationed at Pelusium, awaited the approach of the invader.

The Persians crossed the Desert, and pitching their camp close to the Egyptians, made ready for battle; a stubborn fight followed, and at length, when vast numbers had been slain on both sides, the Egyptians turned and fled in complete disorder to Memphis. The city itself does not appear to have been surrounded by a wall, but the innermost part of the citadel was strongly fortified, and there the Egyptians shut themselves up. A Persian herald soon arrived from Cambyses. He had orders to sail in a Mitylenean vessel up the Nile to Memphis, and then call upon the Egyptians to surrender; but the exasperated people, when they saw the vessel drawing near, poured forth in crowds from the castle, destroyed the ship, and, tearing the Mityleneans limb from limb, bore them into the fortress. This act of cruelty was speedily avenged. Cambyses besieged and took Memphis; and after a short time, not only Egypt, but the neighbouring countries, Libya, Cyrene and Barca, submitted themselves to his power. The unfortunate Psammenitus was taken prisoner, and his sufferings are thus described by Herodotus:—

“Ten days after the fort had fallen, Cambyses resolved to try the spirit of Psammenitus, the Egyptian king,

whose whole reign had been but six months. He therefore had him set in one of the suburbs, and many other Egyptians with him, and there subjected him to insult. First of all, he sent his daughter out from the city, clothed in the garb of a slave, with a pitcher to draw water. Many virgins, the daughters of the chief nobles, accompanied her, wearing the same dress. When the damsels came opposite the place where their fathers sat, shedding tears and uttering cries of woe, the fathers, all but Psammenitus, wept and wailed in return, grieving to see their children in so sad a plight; but he, when he had looked and seen, bent his head towards the ground. In this way passed by the water carriers. Next to them came Psammenitus's son, and two thousand Egyptians of the same age with him, all of them having ropes round their necks and bridles in their mouths, and they too passed by on their way to suffer death for the murder of the Mytileneans who were destroyed with their vessel in Memphis. For so had the royal judges given their sentence: 'for each Mitylenean ten of the noblest Egyptians must forfeit life.' King Psammenitus saw the train pass on, and knew his son was being led to death, but while the other Egyptians who sat around him wept and were sorely troubled, he showed no further sign than when he saw his daughter. And now, when they too were gone, it chanced that one of his former boon companions, a man advanced in years, who had been stripped of all that he had and was a beggar, came where Psammenitus, son of Amasis, and the rest of the Egyptians were, asking alms from the soldiers. At this sight the king burst into tears, and, weeping out aloud, called his friend by his name, and smote himself on the head. Now there were some who had been sent to watch Psammenitus, and see what he would do as each train went by; so these persons went and told Cambyses of his behaviour. Then he, astonished at what was done, sent a messenger to

Psammenitus, and questioned him saying, 'Psammenitus, thy lord Cambyses asketh thee why, when thou sawest thy daughter brought to shame, and thy son on his way to death, thou didst neither utter cry nor shed tears, while to a beggar who is, he hears, a stranger to thy race, thou gavest these marks of honour.' To this question Psammenitus made answer, 'O son of Cyrus, my own misfortunes were too great for tears, but the woe of my friend deserved them. When a man falls from splendour and plenty into beggary at the threshold of old age, one may well weep for him.' When the messenger brought back this answer, Cambyses owned it was just. Croesus, likewise, 'the King of Lydia, who had been dethroned by the Persians,' the Egyptians say, 'burst into tears,' for he had come into Egypt with Cambyses. And the Persians who were present wept. Even Cambyses himself was touched with pity, and he forthwith gave an order that the son of Psammenitus should be spared from the number of those appointed to die, and Psammenitus brought from the suburbs into his presence. The messengers were too late to save the life of Psammenitus's son, who had been cut in pieces the first of all; but they took Psammenitus himself and brought him before the king. Cambyses allowed him to live with him, and gave him no more harsh treatment; nay, could he have kept from intermeddling with affairs, he might have recovered Egypt, and ruled as governor under Cambyses; but," adds Herodotus, "Psammenitus plotted evil and received his reward accordingly. He was discovered to be stirring up revolt in Egypt, wherefore Cambyses, when his guilt clearly appeared, compelled him to drink bull's blood, which presently caused his death.—Such was the end of Psammenitus."

After this event, Cambyses left Memphis, and went to Sais. It appears to have been his wish at first to conform

to the Egyptian customs. An inscription on a statuette at Rome, of a distinguished person of the priestly order, says that, in going to Saïs, he presented offerings to Neith, and performed the libations and ceremonies like the kings who had preceded him, turning out all those who had built houses in the temple of Neith, and purifying it for the performance of the customary rites. He also went into the holy places, and apparently to the tomb of Osiris, and he seems to have been initiated in the mysteries of the Egyptian religion like a Pharaoh: receiving also that royal title added to his own. It has been stated that on entering the palace of Amasis, at Saïs, Cambyzes commanded the body of the king to be brought forth from the sepulchre, and bade his attendants scourge it, prick it with goads, and finally burn it,—an act which was considered impious both by the Persians and Egyptians; but this and similar stories cannot be entirely credited, as they were related to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests, who were the enemies of the Persian monarch. The character of Cambyzes appears, however, to have been despotic and capricious; and during the latter part of his reign his actions were so wildly extravagant as to have given rise to the belief that he was insane.

Egypt being subdued, the Persian King was desirous of extending his conquests further, and an expedition was sent to explore Ethiopia, and bring back a report of the country.

Herodotus tells us that the King of Ethiopia, knowing that the Persians who had entered his country were spies, sent back an insulting message to Cambyzes, which so excited his wrath that he immediately set out on his march against the Ethiopians, without having made any provision for the sustenance of his troops. Before he had accomplished one-fifth of the distance the provisions failed, and the soldiers were actually obliged to devour

the beasts of burden which accompanied the army. Cambyses still took no heed, but continued to march forward. So long as there was any vegetation the soldiers sustained life by eating the grass and herbs, but when at length they came to the bare sand, a portion of them had recourse to a most horrible mode of support, and cast lots by tens for one man who should be slain to be food for the rest. Cambyses then became alarmed, he gave up his meditated attack on Ethiopia, and, retreating by the way he had come, went back to Memphis. Another expedition was sent about the same time against the people who inhabited the oasis of Amun, in the Libyan desert. The word oasis is derived from an Egyptian word, signifying an island in the sea of sand. The oases are depressions in the great table land of Libya, which are preserved from the inroads of the shifting sands by the steep hills of limestone which surround them. They are watered by springs, and thus rendered fertile and habitable. The oasis of Amun was particularly celebrated as being the seat of the worship and the oracle of the god Amun. The army of Cambyses having journeyed about six or seven days, is said to have been destroyed by a sandstorm. Whether this is true or not, it is certain that it was never heard of again. Such great disasters must have embittered the feelings of Cambyses, and he was farther irritated by finding, when he arrived at Memphis, the whole city given up to rejoicing. Caring little, as it would seem, for their subjugation to the conquering Persians, they had arrayed themselves in their gayest garments, and were enjoying themselves in feasts and revelries, whilst celebrating the appearance of the god Apis, who had just been found. Cambyses, full of suspicion, imagined that they were rejoicing over his misfortunes, and sending for the officers under whose government Memphis had been placed, he demanded of

them, "why, when he was in Memphis before, the Egyptians had done nothing of this kind, but waited until now, when he had returned with the loss of so many of his troops?" The officers replied, "that one of the Egyptian gods had appeared, a god, who at long intervals of time had been accustomed to show himself in Egypt, and that always on his appearance the whole of Egypt feasted and kept jubilee." When Cambyses heard this he exclaimed that the officers lied, and as liars he condemned them all to suffer death.

The sentence was executed; and Cambyses then summoned the priests to his presence; and questioned them upon this strange subject. The answers made to his inquiries corresponded with the account given by the officers, and Cambyses, irritated and perplexed, declared that he would soon know whether a false god had really come to dwell in Egypt, and ordered Apis to be brought before him. The priest returned, bringing with them the sacred bull. Cambyses drew his dagger and stabbed the animal in the thigh. Then turning scornfully to the priests he exclaimed: "Think ye that gods become like this, of flesh and blood and sensible to steel? A fit god indeed for the Egyptians, such an one! But it shall cost you dear that you have made me your laughing stock." And having said this, he ordered those whose business it was, to scourge the priests and put any Egyptians to death who might be found keeping the festival of the false god. Apis, thus sorely wounded, lay some time pining in the temple, and at last died. The priests buried him secretly, without the knowledge of Cambyses.

It has also been said that Cambyses killed the bull and gave it to the dogs, and certainly, considering the reckless excitement of the king's mind, it would be more likely that he should kill the animal than be satisfied with merely wounding it. The Persian religion rendered him

peculiarly alive to the folly of such idolatry, for, although far removed from the truth, it was still the purest belief held by heathen nations. Fire was the emblem of the Persian deity, and no other visible representations of him were allowed.

The prophet Ezekiel, in the reign of Hophra, or Apries, while the war between Assyria and Egypt was yet doubtful, had foreseen and foretold the end of the Egyptian power. The warning that Egypt was to fall was given in the most detailed manner, in language which would, perhaps, be more easily understood if the cities to which reference is made were mentioned by the names with which we are most familiar.

"The day is near," said the prophet, "even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen. And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. Ethiopia and Libya, and Lydia, the Troglodytæ, and all the Arabs, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword . . . from Magdolus to Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord God. . . . I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Memphis, and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt; and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt, and will make Upper Egypt desolate, and will set fire in Tanis, and will execute judgments in Thebes. And I will pour my fury upon Sais, the strength of Egypt, and I will cut off the multitude of Thebes. And I will set fire in Egypt. Sais shall have great pain, and Thebes shall be rent asunder, and Memphis shall have distresses daily. The young men of Heliopolis and of Bubastis shall fall by the sword, and these cities shall go into captivity. At Daphne also the day

shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt; and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her a cloud shall cover her, and her daughter shall go into captivity. Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel xxx. 3—19.)

The fulfilment of this threat began with the march of Nebuchadnezzar, and, within fifty years of its being uttered, it was completed on the conquest of Cambyses.



CHAPTER XVI.

EGYPT SUBJECT TO PERSIA, AND SUBDUED BY
ALEXANDER THE GREAT—B.C. 411—324.

From this time Egypt became for many years a satrapy, or province of the Persian Empire, although its internal affairs continued to be managed by native kings. Cambyzes remained a considerable time in Egypt, but his reign belongs to the history of Persia. The rule of the Persian monarchs does not appear to have been severe, but an aversion both natural and religious existed between the two nations, and rebellions again and again broke out.

During the reign of Darius Nothus, king
B. C. 411. of Persia, the Egyptians even succeeded in completely freeing their country from the foreign yoke, and Amyrtæus of Sais became the independent master of Egypt. For him was carved a beautiful sarcophagus, now in the British Museum, and covered both within and without with hieroglyphics. After that period Egypt was for upwards of a hundred years almost entirely free; but the dates of the different monarchs are uncertain, and their reigns comparatively unimportant. During this time many learned men of Greece, and amongst them Herodotus, visited Egypt, but the country was closed again to Greek travellers, when the Persians attempted to recover their dominion.

The short reigns of the Egyptian kings are only remarkable for their struggles for independence. The reign
B. C. 387, of Nectanebo I. is of longer duration than that
or of his immediate predecessors. He so de-
381. feated the Persians that his latter years were

peaceful, and the country being again opened to the curiosity of the Greeks, was, as usual, visited by several men of note, and amongst them, by Plato the philosopher, who brought with him a cargo of olive oil instead of money to pay the expenses of his journey. Plato had been attending Socrates on his death bed, and listening to his conversation on the immortality of the soul, but from the priests of Heliopolis, which was as much a Jewish as an Egyptian city, we may believe that he gained new views of a state of rewards and punishment. He praises the manufacturing industry of the Egyptians, but speaks of them as being singularly afraid of novelty. Their music, for instance, never varied. The priests sang year by year the same poem, as—joining their lamentations with those supposed to be uttered by the goddess Isis,—they mourned the death of Osiris. The painter and sculptor made no change in art, for change was forbidden by the laws. The minds of the people were imprisoned within the system of education in which they had been trained, and the very learning which had so early raised the Egyptians above their neighbours was now chiefly employed to check advancement, and to repress improvement. The poet Euripides is supposed to have accompanied Plato on his journey. He fell ill whilst in Egypt, but was cured by the priests, chiefly by the help of sea water.

Nectanebo I. was succeeded by his nephew B. C. 361. Nectanebo II., under whom the struggle with Persia recommenced, and Nectanebo being completely defeated by Darius Ochus, or Artaxerxes III., retired to Ethiopia, and Egypt became once more a Persian province. This conquest was not however effected without difficulty. On his first invasion, Ochus had failed to establish his power, and the Egyptians, punning on his name Artaxerxes Ochus, had called him Artaxerxes the Ass. When the Persian monarch became the lord of

Egypt, this insult was not forgotten, and, deriding the religion of the people he had conquered, he brought forward an ass as their patron deity, and slew the sacred bull Apis in sacrifice to the new god. But this contempt for all that the Egyptians held sacred was terribly avenged. Soon after Ochus returned to Persia, he was stabbed by the slaves in his own service; the first to strike the blow being Bagoas, an Egyptian eunuch, who was urged to the deed by zeal for the bull Apis. The king's body was cut into pieces and thrown to the beasts, such treatment, according to the Egyptian mythology, having been bestowed upon Osiris by Typhon. It is said that the priests, in order to show their hatred of Ochus, represented him in their catalogue of kings by a sword.

The death of Artaxerxes Ochus, and the rule of his successors, made no change in the fate of Egypt, which still remained Persian province, the Egyptians consoling their wounded vanity, in living under a race of foreign monarchs, by inventing a story that Cyrus, King of Persia, had married a daughter of Apries, and that Cambyses and his successors had therefore gained the kingdom, not by conquest, but by inheritance.

When Alexander the Great undertook the conquest of Persia, he invaded Egypt, which submitted to him without a struggle. The Persian garrisons were not strong enough to guard the towns left in their charge. The Greek fleet easily overpowered that of the Egyptians in the harbour of Pelusium, and the city opened its gates to Alexander, who, ordering his vessels to meet him at Memphis, marched along the banks of the river to Heliopolis, near which place the Macedonian army crossed the Nile, and then entered Memphis.

Memphis had long been the chief city of Egypt, even when not the seat of government. In earlier days, when the warlike monarchs of Thebes had made Egypt the

greatest kingdom in the world, Memphis and the lowland corn-fields of the Delta paid tribute to Thebes; but with the improvements in navigation, the cities on the coast rose in wealth. Riches alone would not, however, have given the sovereignty to Lower Egypt, had not the Greek mercenary troops been at hand to fight for those who would pay them. The kings who reigned at Sais guarded their thrones with Greek soldiers, and this circumstance favoured the conquest of Alexander, for when he entered Egypt these mercenaries at once flocked to his standard, and he found himself placed without opposition on the throne of Upper and Lower Egypt.

The greatest conqueror whom the world has ever seen deserves to be placed amongst the least mischievous. His march is to be traced, not by misery, anarchy and ruin, but by the building of new cities, the careful administration of justice, the revival of trade and the growth of learning. Alexander's first care on reaching Memphis was to prove to the Egyptians that he was come to re-establish their ancient monarchy. He went in state to the temple of Apis, and sacrificed to the sacred bull as the native kings had done at their coronations; and as Amun Re, or Jupiter Ammon the Sun, and the god of Thebes, was the deity under whom Egypt was believed to have seen its proudest days, and whose protection the Egyptian monarchs had especially sought, the Macedonian conqueror desired to lay his offerings also in the temple of this god, and to be acknowledged by the priests as "Son of the Sun," and, like the kings of Thebes, able to boast himself beloved by Amun Re.

But the great temple of Thebes was distant five hundred miles from Memphis, and Alexander, unable as a general, to spare the time necessary for this march, chose rather to visit the nearer and less known temple, in the oasis of Amun, one hundred and eighty miles from the

coast. Accordingly he floated down the river from Memphis to the sea, taking with him the light armed troops and his royal band of chosen warriors. On arriving at Canopus he sailed westward along the coast, and landed at Rhacotis, a small village on the spot where Alexandria now stands. Here he made no stay; but one glance—for he was never there a second time—must have shewn him that the place was formed by nature to be a great harbour, and that, with a little help from art, it would be the port of all Egypt. Orders were given to Dinocrates, the architect, to improve the harbour, and to lay down the plan of a new city to be called, after its founder, Alexandria; and the success of this undertaking proved to after generations the wisdom both of the statesman and the builder. From Rhacotis, Alexander marched along the coast about two hundred miles and then turned southward to the oasis.

The oasis of Ammon is the most northerly of the three oases of the Libyan desert. It is a green and shady valley, refreshed by a deep spring of water, and lying in the midst of parched sand-hills. Here stood the temple of Amun Re, containing the statue of the god, who was represented as a man having the head and horns of a ram. The priests of the temple carried on a small trade with Lower Egypt, by sending thither a valuable salt, probably manufactured from the soot of dried camel's manure, the usual fuel of the Desert, and which, from the name of the place, was called salt of ammonia. The devotion of the merchants who visited the oasis, and left their treasures in the strong rooms of the temple whilst they rested themselves and their camels under the palm trees, had caused the statue to be loaded with jewels, and as a further token of honour to the god, the priests were accustomed on holidays to carry the statue on their shoulders, in a gilt barge, with silver disks hanging from

each side, men and women following, and singing hymns in praise of Amun Re. The chief priest of this celebrated temple, whether willing or unwilling, could not hesitate to hail the conqueror of Egypt as the son of Amun Re; and Alexander having been met and acknowledged by this title, and thus obtained the object for which he had undertaken the journey, left his gifts to the temple, and returned by the shortest way to Memphis.

The Macedonian monarch was much ridiculed by the Greeks for thus calling himself the "Son of Ammon;" but there is reason to believe that his only motive was that of policy. Among his friends he always allowed such claims to divinity to be made the subject of a joke, and in his graver moments he is said to have remarked that God is the father of us all, and that he makes the best men in a peculiar manner his sons; and once, when wounded, he pointed out to the bystanders the blood which flowed from his body, observing that it was like that of other mortals.

At Memphis, Alexander received congratulatory embassies from Greece, reviewed his troops, and gave out his orders for the government of his new kingdom.

He divided the country into two nomarchies or judgeships, and chose two Egyptians to be nomarchs, thus entrusting to natives the highest civil offices in the kingdom. The garrisons were left under the command of his own Greek generals. Other cities were also given to Greek governors, but all were commanded to administer justice according to the common law, or ancient customs of Egypt. This is perhaps the earliest instance that history has recorded of a conqueror ruling a province in accordance with its own institutions; and whether Alexander had any example to direct him, or whether his government was the result of his own good sense, the highest meed of praise is due to him as the sove-

reign who first taught this lesson of statesmanlike wisdom.

Alexander did not remain in Egypt longer than was necessary to issue these orders. He found time to talk with Psammo, the philosopher of the greatest name then in Memphis, but though the buildings of Upper Egypt were unvisited, he hastened towards the Euphrates to meet the King of Persia, and complete the conquest of that country. In his absence Egypt remained upon the whole quiet and happy, although Cleomenes, the prefect and collector of taxes, proved wholly unworthy of his position, and by dishonesty and avarice caused great dissatisfaction, even amongst the Macedonian soldiers.

At Ecbatana, the capital of Media, Alexander lost his friend, Hephestion, and in grief for his death he sent to Egypt to inquire of the oracle of Amun what honours he might pay to the memory of one so deeply loved. The messenger brought him an answer that he might declare Hephestion a demi-god, and decree worship to be paid him. Alexander accordingly sent an express command to Cleomenes, to build a temple to his lost favourite, in the new city of Alexandria, ordering also that the lighthouse which was to be built on the island of Pharos, should be named after him; and as modern insurances against risks at sea usually commence with the words "In the name of God, Amen;" so all contracts between merchants in the city of Alexandria, were to be written solemnly "In the name of Hephestion."

Alexander wrote these orders from the sources of the Indus, and feeling the difficulty of enforcing obedience at the mouth of the Nile, he added in his directions, that if, when he returned to Egypt, he found his wish carried into effect, he would pardon Cleomenes for those acts of misgovernment, of which he had been accused, and for any others which might then be brought before

him. But the opportunity for this promised forgiveness never arrived. Alexander's wars in Persia and India, and his reign at Babylon, occupied eight years from the time he had entered Egypt, and at the end of that period he died (B.C. 323), leaving no definite successor to his great empire, and thus giving rise to a series of quarrels, wars and intrigues, which for years convulsed the whole civilised world.



GREEK KINGDOM IN EGYPT.

CHAPTER XVII.

PTOLEMY LAGUS, GOVERNOR OF EGYPT—B.C. 324—306.

B. C. 324. THE death of Alexander the Great was the signal for war and disunion throughout the whole of his vast empire. Although Arridaeus, his half-brother, a prince of weak mind, was acknowledged as his nominal successor, yet the real authority was entirely lodged in the great lords and generals, who divided the provinces amongst themselves. Egypt, Libya, Cyrenaica, with that part of Arabia which borders on Egypt, were assigned to Ptolemy, the reputed son of a Macedonian of low birth named Lagos, but who is believed to have been really the half-brother of Alexander the Great. Before Alexander ascended the throne of Macedon, Ptolemy Lagos was his friend. He afterwards accompanied the king in his distant wars, and was always treated by him with the greatest favour, and it may possibly have been a feeling of real gratitude for past benefits which induced Ptolemy to decide that the body of Alexander should be conveyed to Egypt. But ambition and superstition were probably blended with this higher feeling. There was a current prediction that the place where Alexander should be interred would be rendered the most happy and flourishing part of the whole earth, and this belief induced his generals to contest with each other the disposal of the king's body. Perdikkas, the favoured commander, to whom Alexander

on his death-bed had delivered his ring, with orders to convey his body to the Temple of Amun, in Libya, forgetful of the king's last wish, desired that the body should be taken to Aige, in Macedonia, where the remains of the Macedonian monarchs were usually deposited. Others proposed different places, but the preference was at last given to Egypt, and when two years had been employed in preparing everything that could render the funeral the grandest which had ever been seen, the procession set out on its long march. Pioneers and workmen led the way, their duty being to prepare the road by which the funeral was to pass. The chariot in which the body of Alexander was conveyed to its last resting place was singularly magnificent. A golden pavilion, twelve feet wide and eighteen in length, was erected on the top. The inside was adorned with a blaze of jewels, and on the exterior was represented the king seated in a military chariot, with a sceptre by his side, and surrounded by all which had contributed to his conquests,—soldiers, horses, elephants and ships. Under the pavilion was a throne of gold, beneath which was placed the coffin, formed of beaten gold, and half filled with aromatic spices and perfumes. The royal guards, magnificently arrayed, followed the chariot, and an immense multitude of persons were spectators of the solemnity, drawn together either by veneration for the memory of Alexander or by the magnificence of the funeral pomp, which had never been equalled.

Ptolemy Lagus was not one of those who accompanied the funeral from Babylon, but when he knew that the march had begun, he set out from Egypt with a numerous guard of his best troops in order to meet it. The procession had reached Syria when he and his attendants joined it, and he then succeeded in diverting it from its original destination; and the body of the late monarch, instead of being interred in the Temple of Amun, was

deposited at Memphis, from whence it was to be conveyed to Alexandria.

For some reasons this might have appeared its most fitting home. Alexandria was one of the great monuments of the power and wisdom of the king from whom its name was derived, and who had founded it.

In the time of the Pharaohs the trade of Egypt was confined to the countries bordering on the Arabian Gulf: the Mediterranean was not used by them for maritime purposes, connected either with war or commerce, until the enterprise of strangers began to suggest its importance. But when the advantages to be derived from a more extended trade were perceived, the necessity of a port on the Mediterranean became evident. It was not, however, until the time of Alexander the Great that any decided steps were taken for the attainment of an object so desirable. That prince, as it has been already said, on his road to the temple of Amun, in Lybia, passed along the sea-coast, and observing the natural harbour formed by the island of Pharos, and the other local recommendations which rendered the position suitable for a commercial city, lost no time in making arrangements for its commencement, and the plan of the future Alexandria was drawn out, and the foundations were laid, before he proceeded on his journey. The prosperity of the city is said to have been betokened from its commencement, for whilst the architect was marking out the lines of the streets upon the ground, the chalk he used happened to be exhausted, upon which Alexander, who was present at the time, ordered him to employ the flour destined for the workmen's food, thereby enabling him to complete the outline of many of the streets, and this accidental circumstance was deemed a good omen, as it was supposed to signify that the city should enjoy food and all things in abundance.

The city thus founded by Alexander, though begun

before his death, was not completed till several years after. When finished it was three miles long, and about three-quarters of a mile broad. The two main streets crossed each other at right angles, in the centre. One end of the island of Pharos being joined to the mainland by a stone wall, nearly three-quarters of a mile in length, called the Heptastadium, formed the breakwater of a large harbour, in front of which were many of the public buildings, such as the Emporium, or Exchange, the royal docks, for building ships of war, and the Poseidon, or temple of Neptune, where the Greek sailors might offer up their vows on setting sail, or perform them on their return from a long voyage. Here also stood the Soma,—the burial-place of the Greek kings of Egypt, and in which the body of Alexander was eventually placed. A theatre, an amphitheatre, a gymnasium, with a large portico, a stadium, or race ground, public groves, gardens, and a hippodrome, or ground for chariot races, all formed part of the glories of Alexandria. Towering above all was to be seen the temple of Serapis, whose worship was derived from the reverence paid by the Egyptians to Osiris, blended with some of the mythological legends of the Greeks.

It was to this city that Ptolemy Lagus, as it has been said, resolved to bring the body of Alexander; but the tomb not being yet prepared for its reception, he was compelled to delay the fulfilment of his intention. The remains of the great conqueror were, for the time, left where they had been placed at Memphis, and the task of removing them to Alexandria devolved upon Ptolemy's successor.

The character of Ptolemy Lagus has been generally represented in a favourable light, and there is no doubt that, compared with his contemporaries, he appears to deserve the praises bestowed upon him for his mildness and moderation; but there are many evidences to prove

that he did not shrink from any measure which seemed requisite in order to carry out his objects ; and the position in which he was placed must have fostered his ambition by compelling him to exert all his power to crush the rivals who profiting by the anarchy of the times, endeavoured to subdue him. Perdicas was the chief of these enemies. He had been appointed the guardian of Alexander's infant son, who was born after the king's death, and was associated with Arridaeus in the throne ; and he had also been constituted regent. With the view of raising himself to a still higher position, he proposed to himself to divorce his wife, the sister of Antipater, governor of Macedonia, and to marry Cleopatra, Alexander's sister ; but this project excited the jealousy of the other generals, and a league was formed to oppose him, in which Ptolemy took part. Ptolemy, by his wise government, had gained the hearts of the Egyptians, and even the soldiers under the command of Perdicas regarded him with great esteem. When the wars between the generals broke out, and Perdicas prepared to invade Egypt, his troops followed him with great reluctance, and numbers deserted daily to Ptolemy. Perdicas, however, advanced as far as Pelusium without opposition, but the banks of the Nile were strongly fortified and guarded by Ptolemy. Still resolved to pursue his course, Perdicas commanded his soldiers to pass an arm of the river which formed an island near Memphis. The attempt was most hazardous. No less than two thousand men lost their lives in making it ; half of them were drowned, and the remainder devoured by crocodiles ; and the troops of Perdicas, exasperated by such a reckless expenditure of human life, rose in mutiny against their general. A hundred of the principal officers joined them, and the unfortunate Perdicas was assassinated in his tent, with the greater number of his intimate friends.

Two days after this event the army received intelligence of a great battle which had been fought in Syria between two other generals, and in which the party of Perdiccas had been victorious. Had this information been received earlier it would probably have prevented the mutiny, but Ptolemy, who passed the Nile and repaired to the camp of Perdiccas the very day after that general's assassination, contrived, with great skill, to turn the circumstance to his own profit. In the contest which had just taken place in Syria, Craterus, one of the generals who was in alliance with Ptolemy, and opposed to the party of Perdiccas, had been killed. He was a Macedonian, and a great favourite with the soldiers who fought under Perdiccas, and who were for the most part Macedonians themselves; and although called upon to take part in a contrary cause, they could not hear of his death without affliction and resentment, and Ptolemy, by encouraging this feeling, soon brought over the whole army to his side. War, however, still continued; for, although Perdiccas was dead, there were great disputes between the other generals. Every one was bent upon increasing his own dominions, and Ptolemy, being desirous to secure to himself Syria, Phœnicia and Judea, sent an army to invade those provinces, whilst he himself set out with a fleet to attack the coasts. The Syrian governor was quickly defeated and taken prisoner, and Ptolemy himself then advanced into Judea. The Jews were the only people who really resisted him. They had taken the oaths of allegiance to the former governor of Syria, and they considered themselves still bound by them. Ptolemy therefore prepared to besiege Jerusalem. The city was strong, both from its natural position and its fortifications, and it might have sustained a long siege; but Ptolemy took the opportunity of assaulting it on the Sabbath, on which day the inhabitants considered it unlawful to defend

themselves, and the result was an easy conquest. The people were at first treated by their victors with great severity, and upwards of a hundred thousand were carried captive into Egypt. But after-consideration convinced Ptolemy that the fact of their resisting him from a principle of fidelity to their governor rendered them the more worthy of his own confidence, and he accordingly chose thirty thousand of the most distinguished among them, and appointed them to guard the most important places in his dominions.

In the numerous wars which followed, Ptolemy lost (though he afterwards regained) Syria and Phœnicia, and also for a time added Cyprus to his dominions. The circumstances connected with the subjugation of Cyprus were very tragical. Nicocles, King of Pathos, who was one of the many petty kings then reigning in the island, submitted to Ptolemy, but was, a few years afterwards, induced to make a league with Antigonus, another of Alexander's most famous generals; and Ptolemy, in order to prevent the other Cyprian princes from imitating his example, ordered some of his officers in Cyprus to destroy Nicocles. This command was so terrible to the officers that they earnestly entreated the unhappy king to save them the necessity of fulfilling it, and to put himself to death. Nicocles, seeing himself utterly destitute of defence, consented, and became his own executioner; and although orders had been given by Ptolemy that the queen and the princesses who were in the palace should be treated with the respect due to their rank, they could not be prevented from following his example. The queen slew her daughters, and then exhorting the other princesses of the royal family not to survive the calamity by which the king had fallen, plunged her dagger into her own breast. The husbands of the princesses, after having set

fire to the four corners of the palace, destroyed themselves in like manner.

It was after the tragical event by which Ptolemy had become master of Cyprus that he undertook to reconquer Syria. The province was then in the hands of Demetrius, surnamed Poliorcetes, or the Besieger, who was the son of Alexander's general, Antigonus. Demetrius was remarkable for his great bravery and fascinating manner, and his life was one of the most varied and eventful of that changing period of the world's history. The two generals met at Gaza, where a sharp conflict took place. Ptolemy was victorious, and Demetrius lost five thousand men killed, besides eight thousand who were made prisoners. His tents and treasures were also taken from him, and he was compelled to retreat to Azotus, from whence he proceeded to the frontiers of Upper Syria, and abandoned Phœnicia, Palestine and Coele Syria to Ptolemy.*

Before his departure from Azotus Demetrius sent a message to Ptolemy desiring leave to bury the dead. Ptolemy not only granted the request, but also restored to him all his tents, furniture, friends and servants, declaring that they ought not to make war upon each other for riches, but for glory. It is said that Demetrius, on receiving this proof of generosity, immediately prayed to the gods not to leave him long indebted to Ptolemy for such great benefits, but to furnish him with the opportunity of returning them.

Antigonus, the father of Demetrius, received the intelligence of his son's defeat without any visible emotion. "Ptolemy has defeated boys," he said, "but he shall soon have men to deal with;" and he willingly complied with the wish of Demetrius to make a second trial of his forces

* Coele Syria was the name at this time applied to the southern part of Syria. The district was the same as that called in Scripture Syro-Phœnicia.

against the governor of Egypt. In this attempt success was on the side of Demetrius. The general of Ptolemy's army, was taken prisoner, with 7000 men, and his camp and baggage fell into the hands of Demetrius. It was the occasion Demetrius had desired for acquitting himself of the obligation under which he lay, and the whole of the booty was restored, whilst the general and the prisoners were sent back laden with magnificent presents. Antigonus followed up his son's victory, and joined him with fresh troops; and Ptolemy, being aware that he was not able to oppose their united forces, demolished the fortifications of Aco, Joppa, Samaria and Gaza, and retired to Egypt, whilst Antigonus again took possession of Palestine, Phœnicia and Cœle Syria. Many of the inhabitants of these provinces followed Ptolemy. The moderation with which the Egyptian governor had always treated them had gained their affections, and they desired rather to live under his dominion in a foreign country than to remain subject to Antigonus, from whom they had no cause to expect humane treatment. The proposals made to them by Ptolemy strengthened this first inclination.

Alexandria was to be the future capital of Egypt, and it was therefore Ptolemy's object to induce persons to settle there. The Jews who followed him from Palestine were offered peculiar privileges if they would take up their residence in Alexandria, and as the neighbouring country was rich and healthy, and Ptolemy's protection was of great importance to them, they were easily persuaded to consent. The report of the advantages conferred upon them induced others to follow their example, and a large body of Samaritans also established themselves in Alexandria on a similar footing.

These circumstances,—apparently such as we are accustomed to call accidental,—were, as it will afterwards be

shown, most important in their effects upon the world generally. The wars which had been carried on since the death of Alexander were now for a short time suspended. A general peace was declared by the generals, and it was proposed that measures should be taken to place young Alexander Ægus, the son of Alexander the Great, upon the throne of Macedon as soon as he should be of age. But no one was really in earnest in supporting this proposal. The generals had been too long accustomed to exercise supreme authority voluntarily to resign it, and the young king had for years been kept in prison. The project for the establishment of his sovereignty was indeed followed, not only by his murder, but by that of every other member of the family of the great conqueror, and war then broke out anew, and the years which succeeded were marked by a series of disputes, victories and defeats as complicated as those which had preceded the short-lived peace.

Amidst the various alternations of conquest and loss, Ptolemy had, up to this period, always retained possession of Cyprus, but it was destined now to be taken from him. Demetrius made a descent upon the island, defeated Ptolemy's brother, who had been left to defend it, and had shut himself up in the capital, and succeeded in totally destroying the fleet which Ptolemy himself soon brought to oppose him. The victory was complete, and the conquest of great importance, and when the intelligence reached Syria, where Antigonus had remained awaiting the event with the deepest anxiety, the people who surrounded him at once proclaimed Antigonus and Demetrius Kings of Asia,—the name Asia being at that period applied particularly to the portion of Asia Minor, over which Antigonus ruled, and which included Mysia, Lydia, Caria and Phrygia.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PTOLEMY LAGUS, OR SOTER, KING OF EGYPT—B. C. 306.

THE Egyptians were not long in following the example of the Syrians and changing their governor into a king. Being resolved to show that they were not dejected at the loss of Cyprus, and that they did not the less esteem their ruler, they conferred the regal title upon B. C. 306. Ptolemy; and Lysimachus, the governor of Thrace, and Seleucus, the governor of Babylon, assumed the same dignity immediately afterwards.

From this period,—eighteen years after Alexander's death,—his empire was distinctly divided into separate kingdoms, and the various sovereigns not only assumed the name, but the pomp and state of royalty.

Antigonus carried on the war with renewed vigour after the successful attempt upon Cyprus. He even thought himself in a condition to invade Egypt, but the difficulties of the undertaking proved to be greater than he had anticipated, and he was finally compelled to relinquish it. He was still however bent upon diminishing the powers of his rival, and for this purpose he demanded succours of the inhabitants of Rhodes, an island which from its fertility and commerce, and its superiority in all the arts of civilised life, formed a small but powerful state, the friendship of which was generally sought. It had indeed been rising in rank whilst other free states had been falling; and its maritime laws were so highly esteemed that they were copied by most other states, and

being adopted by the Emperor Justinian in the code of law called the Pandects, they have in part become the law of modern Europe. During the many wars of that period, the Rhodians had been careful to observe an exact neutrality. Their prosperity depended upon their commerce, and it was of the utmost consequence to them to maintain a friendly intercourse with the states bordering the Mediterranean; but Egypt was their chief ally, the most advantageous branches of their commerce being derived from thence. They hesitated, therefore, to grant the assistance demanded by Antigonus, and entreated that they might not be compelled to declare war against their ancient friend. This hesitation enraged Antigonus, and Demetrius was sent with a fleet and army to punish those who thus dared to dispute his will. The Rhodians, who foresaw the impending storm, sent to all the princes, their allies, entreating for assistance; a special message being despatched to Ptolemy urging that it was attachment to his interest which had drawn upon them the dangers to which they were then exposed. The appeal was not made in vain. All persons distinguished for military talent in the countries which were in alliance with the Rhodians hastened to the besieged city, as much for the honour of assisting a state so respected, as to manifest their own skill in defending it against Demetrius, who was reputed one of the greatest captains, and the most expert in the conduct of sieges, that the world had till then known.

The Rhodians began their preparations by dismissing from the city all useless persons. The number of those remaining who were capable of bearing arms amounted to six thousand citizens, and a thousand strangers. Liberty was promised to the slaves who should distinguish themselves by their bravery, and it was publicly declared that the parents, wives and children of those

who might lose their lives in the engagements, should be provided for at the expense of the country; while the sons—when old enough to bear arms—should be presented with a complete suit of armour, on the occasion of the great festival held in honour of the god Bacchus.

This decree excited the utmost enthusiasm in all ranks. The rich came forward with offers of money to defray the expense of the siege, and the workmen redoubled their industry in making arms and warlike machines.

There was great need for these exertions. Demetrius appeared before the city with 200 ships of war, more than 170 transports, conveying about 40,000 men, without including the cavalry, and a thousand small vessels laden with provisions. On his arrival he landed, in order to decide upon the best situation for the commencement of the assault, whilst parties were despatched to lay the country waste on all sides, and a body of troops was ordered to cut down the trees, and demolish the houses near the city, so that materials might be provided with which to fortify the camp. The first object of Demetrius was to make himself master of the port, and with this view the attack was begun from the sea. Huge towers were placed upon ships strongly bound together, and from these it was intended to discharge volleys of stones and darts upon the towers which defended the entrance to the port. A violent tempest during the day at first interfered with the success of this plan; but the night being calm, Demetrius took advantage of it, to draw near the port unperceived by the enemy, and even to station a body of troops on an eminence near the wall; and these joined in the general attack which was made on the following morning. The loss was then almost equal, but the following night the Rhodians, taught by their enemies, availed themselves of the darkness to send out fire-ships with the view of burning the floating towers. This

attempt failed, and in the same way the siege continued, with alternate loss and success on both sides, for eight days. The ardour of the besiegers seemed to increase with every repulse. Their attacks were so numerous, both by sea and land, that the Rhodians could with difficulty discover to which side they were summoned for defence. Numbers of the besiegers mounted the scaling ladders, and were thrown to the ground, miserably bruised; whilst several of the principal officers, who, though covered with wounds, reached at length the top of the wall, were made prisoners.

Demetrius, notwithstanding the valour displayed by his troops, was at length obliged to retreat for the purpose of repairing his military engines, as well as his vessels. When seven days had been employed in this work, the attack was renewed by sea, and the greatest efforts were made to take the port. They proved, however, unsuccessful. The Rhodians received succours both from Crete and Egypt, and Demetrius, hopeless then of carrying out his project, determined to assault the city itself by land. With this view he constructed a monstrous engine called *helepolis*. The base was seventy-five feet square, and the whole mass rested upon eight huge wheels. The machine itself was composed of nine stories, each of which had two staircases, one for the ascent of the soldiers, and the other for their descent, and in front of each story were little windows from which arrows could be shot. The *helepolis* was furnished also with enormous battering-rams and other instruments for attacking the city. Three of the sides were plated with iron to prevent its being damaged with fire, and castors were placed under it, so that it might be turned quickly and easily, and it was moved forward by 3000 of the strongest and most vigorous men in the army.

The Rhodians were not indolent during these formid-

able preparations, but employed their time in raising a counter-wall on the tract of ground from which Demetrius intended to batter the wall of the city with the helepolis. In order to accomplish this work, they demolished the wall which surrounded the theatre, and also destroyed some of the neighbouring houses, and even some temples, promising solemnly, however, to the gods to build more magnificent structures for the celebration of their worship after the siege should be raised.

The helepolis being moved to the situation from whence the city might be attacked with the best effect, Demetrius ordered the trumpets to sound, and a general assault to be made both by sea and land. But in the very heat of the attack, and when the walls were already shaken by the battering rams, ambassadors arrived from the Cretan allies who were assisting the Rhodians, earnestly soliciting Demetrius to suspend his operations, and giving him hopes that they might prevail upon the inhabitants of the besieged city to submit to an honorable capitulation. A suspension of arms was accordingly granted, but the Rhodians refused the conditions proposed to them, and the attack recommenced with such fury that a large tower built with square stones was battered down, together with the wall that flanked it.

The besieged fought like lions in the breach, and just at this conjuncture some vessels, which Ptolemy had freighted with corn and other kinds of grain for provisions for the Rhodians, arrived in the port, and were soon afterwards followed by two more small fleets, sent by other allies, and laden in a similar way. This most seasonable and abundant supply, which arrived just when food was becoming scarce, inspired the besieged with new courage, and they resolved not to surrender till the last extremity.

The following midnight a body of soldiers, carrying

torches and all kinds of kindled wood, marched out of the city, with the determination of destroying the war-like machines, whilst men were stationed upon the walls to send showers of arrows against those who should endeavour to extinguish the flames. An attempt was even made to set fire to the helepolis, which was left partially uncovered from the falling away of several of the outer plates of iron, but as the troops within the moving tower quenched the flames with water as fast as they were kindled, it was not possible to carry out the design.

Demetrius, however, was sufficiently alarmed for the safety of his machines, and caused them to be removed with all possible expedition.

Such determined opposition might have discouraged a less resolute enemy, but Demetrius, whose mind was fruitful and expedient, became only the more determined to attain his object. A plan was formed to surprise the city, and when all the arrangements were made, a signal was given at midnight, and the city was attacked at once on all sides. The inhabitants were thus employed in every direction, and in the darkness and confusion fifteen hundred soldiers from the army of Demetrius rushed through the breach which had already been made in the walls, and after killing a great number of their enemies, seized a position adjacent to the theatre, and were enabled to maintain it.

The alarm in the city was very great. The Rhodian generals in-command despatched orders to their officers and soldiers not to quit their posts, nor to make the least movement, and then, placing themselves at the head of a chosen body of troops, they poured upon the detachment which had so boldly ventured within the walls. But in the darkness of the night it was impossible to dislodge them, and when morning dawned a universal shout was raised by the besiegers, in order to animate those who

had entered the place, and inspire them with a resolution to hold their ground. The terrible cry brought consternation to the hearts of the populace, the women, and children who continued in the city. Tears and groans burst from them, and they gave themselves up for lost. But their fears were premature. The troops of Demetrius defended their posts indeed with a bravery which astonished their enemies, but the numbers of the Rhodians at length prevailed; and, the leader of the detachment being slain, it was impossible longer to keep their position. Very many of the soldiers fell on the spot, and the rest were made prisoners.

Instead of being disheartened by this check, Demetrius considered only how to recover from it, and he was preparing for a new assault, when letters were received from Antigonus directing him to take all possible measures for concluding a peace. A plausible excuse was necessary, but this was soon found in the mediation of some ambassadors from Greece, who about the same time arrived at the camp. There was also another motive which, it has been said, tended to dispose the mind of Demetrius to peace. The huge helepolis had been rendered useless. A Rhodian engineer had undermined the ground, over which it was known that it must pass, in order to approach the walls. The besiegers, not suspecting any such stratagem, moved the tower forward, and the hollow earth, being incapable of supporting so enormous a load, sank under the machine, which thus buried itself to such a depth that it was impossible to draw it out again.

If Demetrius was inclined to offer peace, the Rhodians on their part were quite willing to accept it. Ptolemy, though he had promised fresh succours, had also entreated them not to lose any favourable opportunity for putting an end to the siege, which it was evident could not but prove fatal to them at last. They were therefore pre-

pared to listen with satisfaction to any reasonable proposals, and a treaty was at length concluded upon the following terms.

The Republic of Rhodes and all its citizens were to retain the liberty, rights and privileges previously enjoyed. The alliance they had always had with Antigonus was to be confirmed and renewed, but they were also compelled to enter into an engagement to take up arms for Antigonus in all future wars, provided they were not called upon to fight against Ptolemy. The effectual performance of these conditions was secured by the delivery of a hundred hostages on the part of the Rhodians, to be chosen by Demetrius, whose army then departed from before Rhodes, after having besieged it for a year.

Before his departure, Demetrius, who was desirous to give the Rhodians a proof of reconciliation, presented them with all the warlike machines which he had employed at the siege. These they afterwards sold for an immense sum, which, with an addition of their own, they gave as the price of the famous statue of the Sun, known as the Colossus of Rhodes, and reputed one of the seven wonders of the world. It was the work of Chares, a celebrated statuary of Lindus, in Rhodes, and it employed him for the space of twelve years. The height of this statue was 105 English feet, and few men could clasp its thumb with their arms. A statement has been made that its legs extended over the mouth of the harbour, but for this there is no authority, although ships in full sail could pass between them. Fifty-six years after its erection the colossus was overthrown and broken to pieces by an earthquake. The fragments remained on the ground for more than nine hundred years, when they were sold by the Saracens to a Jew of Emesa, who carried them away on 900 camels.

The Rhodians were deeply sensible of the assistance

which the King of Egypt had rendered them in so dangerous a conjuncture, and after consulting the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, as to the manner in which they should testify their gratitude, they consecrated a grove to Ptolemy's honour, and built within it a sumptuous portico, in which divine honours were rendered to him. They also bestowed upon him the title of Soter or Preserver, by which appellation he is frequently distinguished in history.

An anecdote of a celebrated painter is connected with the siege of Rhodes, and although it does not relate to the course of public events, it is worthy of notice as marking the character and the tastes of Demetrius Poliorcetes. At the time of the siege, Rhodes was the residence of a celebrated painter, named Protogenes, whose house was in the suburbs of the city. Neither the presence of the enemy, nor the noise of arms, could induce him to quit his habitation, or discontinue his work, and this fact coming to the knowledge of Demetrius greatly surprised him. He enquired the cause, and received for answer that Protogenes did not think it necessary to move, because he was sure that Demetrius had declared war against the Rhodians, and not against the sciences. He was not deceived in his opinion, for Demetrius planted a guard round his house, and frequently went himself to watch the progress of the artist's work. The masterpiece of Protogenes was a picture of Ialysus, the tutelary hero of Rhodes. It is said that he employed seven years on this picture and painted it four times over. One of the figures was that of a dog which was much admired by all good judges, but did not satisfy Protogenes. He wished to represent the animal panting, and with his mouth foaming after a long chase, but he could not succeed in rendering the appearance of the foam natural. At length, in a fit of impatience and despair,

he dashed the sponge, which he had used to efface his work, against the painting, and being charged with the right colours it left a mark, in which the artist recognised the very foam which he had before failed to produce.

Hitherto Demetrius had enjoyed a course of almost uninterrupted victory, but his power was now drawing to a close. Although there were others of Alexander's generals who had, like his father and himself, assumed the title of king, yet it was evident none were recognized by them as equals. And the pride and ambition thus openly displayed, soon provoked an antagonistic league between Ptolemy, of Egypt, Seleucus, of Babylon, Lysimachus, of Thrace, and Cassander, of Macedonia.

The confederate army confronted the troops of Antigonus and Demetrius, in Asia Minor, near the city of Ipsus, in Phrygia, and in the great battle which followed Antigonus was killed, and Demetrius, after exhibiting bravery which amounted even to rashness, was compelled to retire with the small remainder of his forces to Ephesus. The result of this victory was very important, for almost all the dominions of Antigonus were divided amongst his conquerors, and the empire of Alexander the Great became four separate kingdoms. Ptolemy was confirmed in the possession of Egypt, Libya, Arabia, Coele Syria, and Palestine. Seleucus reigned over the Asiatic provinces, between the Euphrates and the Indus, whilst the remaining territories, which lay chiefly in Europe, were left to Lysimachus, King of Thrace, and Cassander, King of Macedon. The kingdom of Seleucus is usually called the kingdom of Syria, because Seleucus, who afterwards built Antioch, in that province, made it the chief seat of his residence.

The defeat of Demetrius had been so complete, that it was impossible for him to recover a position of greatness by force of arms, and he was therefore compelled to seek

in some other way the means, if not of re-establishing himself in his former power, at least of confirming himself in that which still remained. The attractions of one of his daughters had gained the heart of Seleucus, and a marriage being concluded, the King of Syria became his friend and ally, and succeeded in reconciling him also with Ptolemy, whose daughter, Polemida, Demetrius afterwards married. This alliance with two powerful monarchs, added to the fact that he was still in possession of Cyprus, Tyre and Sidon, and contrived to seize a portion of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, caused his affairs to assume a better aspect. Another wife of Demetrius was the sister of Pyrrhus, the young King of Epirus. This prince, having been some time before expelled from his dominions by the revolt of his subjects, had placed himself under the protection of his brother-in-law. Now, when a treaty of peace was concluded between Ptolemy and Demetrius, and a hostage was required for Demetrius, Pyrrhus offered himself, and went into Egypt, where he remained some time at Ptolemy's court. The manners of Pyrrhus were noble and engaging, and his character was brave, enduring, energetic, and politic. His keenness of observation soon taught him to distinguish the person with whom it would be most to his advantage to ingratiate himself, and he fixed upon Berenice, the favourite wife of Ptolemy, and remarkable for her prudence as well as her beauty. Berenice, who was originally the wife of a Macedonian nobleman, had first appeared in Egypt as a companion to Eurydice, another of Ptolemy's wives. The king, captivated by her charms, married her, and ever retained a strong affection for her, and he now consented to allow Antigone, the daughter of Berenice, by her first husband, to become the wife of Pyrrhus. The marriage was concluded, and Berenice then exercised her influence so strongly in favor of her son-in-law, that she induced Ptolemy to grant

Pyrrhus a fleet and a sum of money, which enabled him to repossess himself of his dominions. But the restoration of Pyrrhus only added another element of confusion in the intricate history of those troubled times. Demetrius, who was always endeavouring to gain power, and had frequently interfered in the affairs of Greece, and induced Athens to place itself under his protection, at length became obnoxious to the Athenians, who sought for support from Ptolemy. Thus the war was renewed.

Demetrius, as usual, experienced great reverses of fortune, at one time being divested of all his dominions, and at another, finding himself chosen by the voice of the people of Macedonia to be their king; but Pyrrhus at length joined in the league which was formed against him, and finally dispossessed him of his throne. The end of his life was a miserable contrast to the greatness and prosperity of its commencement. After several wild and desperate attempts to regain some position of importance, he was compelled to surrender himself a prisoner to Seleucus, who caused him to be conducted, under a strong guard, to a place near Laodicea, the Chersonesus of Syria. There he was detained prisoner, but a park was allowed him for hunting, and the luxuries of life were provided for him in abundance. For a time Demetrius appeared satisfied with his condition, but, at length, a feeling of deep melancholy stole over him. He could no longer amuse himself with innocent pursuits, but sought the excitement of drinking and gambling, and at the age of fifty-five he died of severe illness, caused by inactivity and intemperance in eating and drinking.

Demetrius Poliorcetes was one of the most remarkable characters of his age. His restless activity of mind, his skill in extricating himself from difficulties, and his daring promptitude in the execution of his schemes, have, perhaps, never been surpassed. The Macedonians, however,

thought him inferior to Pyrrhus in military skill, and probably he was; for Pyrrhus was in subsequent times regarded as one of the greatest generals that ever lived. But the two princes certainly in many respects resembled each other. Pyrrhus was less luxurious and self-indulgent than Demetrius, but he was equally the slave of a restless ambition. It was once said of him that he was like a gambler who makes good throws with the dice, but is unable to make the proper use of the game. Many of the princes of that period appear to have endeavoured to imitate Alexander the Great in their dress, and in a peculiar inclination of the head, and even Pyrrhus was not free from vanity on this point. He flattered himself that his features resembled those of Alexander, and a story is related of him, that on one occasion he sent for the pictures of Alexander, Perdikkas, Cassander, and other princes and generals, and then desired a woman of Larissa, with whom he lodged, to tell him which he most resembled. The woman refused for a considerable time to answer him. At last, when he pressed her very earnestly to satisfy his curiosity, she replied, that she thought him very like Batrachion, who was a noted cook in Larissa.

CHAPTER XIX.

INTERNAL CONDITION OF EGYPT UNDER PTOLEMY SOTER.

AFTER his many wars Ptolemy Soter spent the latter years of his life in tranquillity, without anything to trouble the happiness of his family. Although a great encourager of the arts which tend to refinement; his manners were plain, and his habits of life singularly simple. He often dined and slept at the houses of his friends, and his own establishment was so unlike that of a king, that he was obliged to borrow dishes and tables when he asked any number of persons to dine with him in return. His natural severity was softened by the mildness of his wife, Berenice. Once when Ptolemy was amusing himself by playing a game of dice with her, one of his officers approached and began to read over to him a list of criminals, who for various crimes had been condemned to death. Ptolemy continued playing, giving very little heed to the unhappy tale; but the feelings of Berenice overcame her, and, taking the paper from the officer's hand, she forbade him to finish it, saying that it was very unbecoming in the king to treat the matter so lightly, as if he thought no more of the loss of a life, than the loss of a throw.

Alexandria had by this time become, what Ptolemy desired it should be, a seat of learning and science for the civilised world. The foundation of the Museum, a College of Philosophy, which was enriched by a magnificent library, attracted thither all who were celebrated for science, art, or literature. The Museum itself was a large building erected near the palace, and fronting the

port. Its chief room was a great hall, which was used as a lecture room, and common dining room. The Museum was surrounded by a covered walk, or portico, beneath which the philosophers walked and conversed. The professors were supported at the public expense; and the government of the society was considered so important, that the president was always chosen by the king.

Ptolemy was himself an author. He wrote a history of Alexander's wars, which has unfortunately not come down to us as a whole, though a considerable portion of its contents have been retained in the pages of the Greek historian, Arrian, who highly prized it. This love of literature and art, and the habit of rewarding skill and genius wherever they could be found, made the court of Egypt the resort of painters, sculptors, poets, historians, and mathematicians; and, indeed, of all persons possessing intellect and cultivation of mind.

Apelles, the most celebrated of Grecian painters, was a contemporary of Ptolemy Soter. They had known each other well in former days, for Apelles was the friend of Alexander the Great, who esteemed him so highly that he would not allow any other artist to take his portrait. A picture of Alexander wielding a thunderbolt was, indeed, the most famous of all the paintings of Apelles; though the most admired was that called the *Venus Anadyomene*, or "*Venus rising out of the Sea*," in which the goddess was represented wringing her hair; the falling drops of water forming a transparent veil around her face. Ptolemy and Apelles had at one time unfortunately quarrelled, and Apelles being at Alexandria never visited at the palace. On one occasion, however, some malicious person sent him word that he was asked to dine at the royal table. He went accordingly, and Ptolemy immediately made inquiry who had invited his unwelcome guest. Apelles drew the face of the mischief

maker upon the wall, and he was known to all the court by the likeness.

The breach between Ptolemy and Apelles was still further widened by the mean jealousy of Antiphilus, another rising artist of that day. He found means to bring an accusation against Apelles of joining in a plot against the king, and Apelles narrowly escaped punishment. Ptolemy finding the charge untrue, sent a gift of a hundred talents to make amends to the great painter for the unjust suspicion; but Apelles was by no means conciliated by this present, and his indignation evinced itself in the painting of an allegorical picture called *Calumny*. On the right was depicted Ptolemy holding out his hand to Calumny, who was advancing towards him, dragging by the hair a young man, represented as stretching forth his hands, and calling on the gods to bear witness that he was guiltless. On each side of the king were two female figures intended, apparently, for Ignorance and Suspicion. Before Calumny walked Envy, a pale, hollow-eyed, diseased, man; and behind were the female figures, Craft and Deceit, encouraging and supporting Calumny. At a distance stood Repentance, in a mourning dress, turning away her face for shame, as Truth came up to her.

Ptolemy was not likely to forgive Apelles such a picture as this, but he could the better afford to lose the society of the great painter, as he lived in easy familiarity with all the learned men at Alexandria. Euclid, the mathematician, was one of his friends. Another was Diodorus, the rhetorician, who denied the existence of motion, arguing that the motion was not in the place from whence the body moved, nor in that to which it moved; and that accordingly it did not exist at all. Diodorus once met with an accident and had a severe fall, which put his shoulder out of joint, and he applied to Herophilus, the

surgeon, to set it. Herophilus asked where the fall took place, whether on the spot where the shoulder was, or in that to which it fell,—but the suffering philosopher entreated him to begin by setting his limb, and they would talk about the existence of motion afterwards.

One of the most valuable gifts which Egypt owed to Ptolemy Soter, was its coinage. Although every little city, or even colony of Greece had its peculiar coins, Egypt, until the time of Ptolemy, had very few, and gold and silver were seldom passed from hand to hand without the trouble of weighing, and a doubt as to the fineness of the metal. Ptolemy's coins were of gold, silver, and bronze, and executed in a superior manner. Those of gold and silver, bear on one side the portrait of the king without a beard, having the head bound with the royal diadem, which, unlike the high-priestly crown of the native Egyptian kings, or the modern crown of gold and precious stones, is a plain ribbon tied in a bow behind. On the other side, they bear the name of Ptolemy Soter, or King Ptolemy, with an eagle standing upon a thunder-bolt; and this was only another way of drawing the eagle and sun, the hieroglyphical characters for the title, Pharaoh. The coins of a country are extremely valuable as a witness to the facts of history. By their workmanship they teach us the state of the arts, and by their weight and the purity of their metal—the wealth of the country; whilst their inscriptions bear record to dates and titles of the utmost importance in historical researches.

After having reigned nearly thirty-eight years, and attained the age of eighty, Ptolemy Soter, feeling himself unable to bear the duties of his office, resolved to abdicate his throne, and contenting himself with the title of Soter, to give up his crown to Ptolemy Philadelphus, his son by his favourite wife, Berenice. This decision gave great offence to his eldest son, Ptolemy Ceraunus, whose

mother was Eurydice, the daughter of Antipater, regent of Macedonia. Ceraunus had always considered the crown as his right, but he had shown by every act of his life his unfitness for the trust. When Philadelphus was crowned, Ceraunus retired for a time to the court of Lysimachus, King of Thrace, who had married his half sister, Arsinoë; and he afterwards sought the protection of Seleucus, King of Syria, whose kindness he returned by basely plotting against him, and putting him to death. Ptolemy Ceraunus married Arsinoë after the death of Lysimachus. As they were not children of the same mother, this second marriage was not considered illegal; but a third marriage which in after years, when Ceraunus was dead, took place between Arsinoë and her own brother Philadelphus, must have been a great scandal to the Greeks, although it was not contrary to the laws of the Egyptians.

Ptolemy Soter lived two years after he had withdrawn himself from the cares of government, and his authority, doubtless, tended to establish his son, Philadelphus, in the possession of the throne, to which he could scarcely be said to have been entitled by birth. In reviewing the events of his reign, the thought which naturally arises in our mind, is the complete contrast, between Egypt under its former sovereigns, the great Remeses, the powerful Shishak, and other native monarchs, and Egypt under the rule of a Greek king. The country seems, indeed, scarcely to be Egypt. Name, religion, habits, all seem changed; and when we meet with references to the customs and the faith of more ancient days, a sense of unreality is aroused. Ptolemy Soter worshipping Osiris, appears to us rather as an actor assuming a character which does not belong to him, than as a sovereign carrying out the traditional worship of his people; and, although we read of his spending the enormous sum of £8500 on

the funeral of the sacred bull Apis, which had died soon after he came to Egypt, we recognise such an action as one of political necessity, and not as conveying any real idea of his religious belief. It is this probably which, with many persons, causes a deficiency of interest in the dynasty of the Ptolemies. The kings are Greeks, their tastes and habits are Greek, but they call themselves Egyptians; and unable to sympathise with them, either as the representatives of the most civilized or the most ancient of the world's empires, we turn from them with indifference.

We may, perhaps, be inclined to ask why Ptolemy thus endeavoured to graft the civilisation of Greece upon the antiquity of Africa—why he did not rather endeavour to recall the greatness of Thebes, and the glory of the days of Remeses? His conquests, his power, his encouragement of art and learning, great and praiseworthy as they were, still failed to make him what the kings of ancient Egypt had been. He was the representative, not of a united people, but of one race amongst many. Might it not have been better to have thrown himself back upon the grandeur of former days; and, identifying himself with the traditions and the laws of the native population, to have overawed the world by an authority dating from a past, worthy of reverence from its remoteness, rather than to have attempted, by the aid of a foreign power, to civilise a country which, in becoming modern, necessarily lost the prestige that had assisted to render it famous?

The answer to this inquiry lies in the fact that such a resurrection of ancient Egypt was impossible. From the moment that Greek soldiers were hired to be the guards of the kings of Lower Egypt, the degradation of the native inhabitants and the influence of the Greeks began. Cambyses indeed conquered the material Egypt; but the spirit of Egypt had been subdued long before, and the

efforts which were afterwards from time to time made to throw off the Persian yoke were due to the courage and arms of Greek soldiers, hired by Egyptian gold. During the 300 years which elapsed from the conquest of Cambyses to that of Alexander the Great, the Egyptians scarcely once stood up in arms for themselves, and the fact that, on the appearance of Alexander, the country submitted to him without a struggle, is at once accounted for when we remember that power and arms were already in the hands of the Greeks. This influence of the Greeks was naturally greatly augmented when the country was once more raised into a separate kingdom, and placed under a Greek monarch, holding his court in what was essentially a Greek capital. All the provinces held by the generals of Alexander became indeed Greek kingdoms; but in no one did so many Greeks settle as in Lower Egypt. Though the rest of the country was governed by native laws, and native judges, the city of Alexandria was under Macedonian law. No Egyptian could live there without feeling that he belonged to a conquered race. He was not admitted to the privileges of a Macedonian citizen, though they were at once granted to every Greek, and after a time even to every Jew who chose to settle there. The same hieroglyphical word was used to express a Greek or a Lower Egyptian, and whenever, during the reigns of the Ptolemies, the citizens of the capital met in public assembly they were addressed as "Ye men of Macedonia." Neither were any efforts made by Ptolemy to unite the two races. When the Greeks settled in Egypt, and intermarried with the natives, their children were declared to be barbarians, and were brought up accordingly. They left the worship of the Greek gods for that of Isis and Osiris, and their descendants were even admitted into the priestly families, a fact certified by the forms of the skulls taken

from the catacombs at Thebes and Memphis, and which plainly show an European origin.

Upper Egypt, however, notwithstanding the influence of the Greeks, had, through all changes, retained to a certain extent its separate existence; but it was regarded as more interesting to the antiquarian than to the statesman. The royal tombs of Thebes were objects of curiosity rather than of reverence. The records of the Egyptian priests mentioned forty-seven, of which the entrances had been covered and hidden, in the hope that the embalmed bodies of the kings might rest within them in peace till they should rise again at the end of the world; but seventeen of these had been discovered and broken open before the reign of Ptolemy Soter. The rest, it was said, had been destroyed; but the assertion was false, and it was perhaps owing to this mistaken belief that they remained unopened for more than two thousand years longer, to reward the researches of modern travellers, and give us an insight into the history of ancient Egypt.

The Greeks, in their accounts of Egypt, have caused great perplexity by their careless alteration of names from similarity of sound. They gave to Miamun Remeses, or Remeses the Second, the common Greek name Memnon. The capital of Upper Egypt, which, as is often the case with a capital, was called The City, or, as the word is in the Coptic or Egyptian, Thabou, they named Thebes, and in their mythology they confounded it with Thebes in Beotia. Another very ancient city, This, or, with the prefix for city, Abou-this, they called Abydos, and then said it was colonized by Milesians from Abydos, the capital of Milesia in Asia Minor. In the same careless way they gave an account of the Egyptian gods. They considered them to be the same as their own, though with new faces; and instead of describing their qualities, they contented

themselves, for the most part, with translating their names.

Next to the Greeks, the Jews were protected and supported by Ptolemy. They had always been friends with the Egyptians of the Delta, and when Ptolemy¹, after the siege of Jerusalem, held out the privileges of citizenship to all who would settle in his rising city of Alexandria, his offers were, as it has been previously stated, accepted by crowds of industrious traders, manufacturers and men of letters, who preferred a life of peace and wealth in Egypt to the risk of having their houses sacked and burnt at every fresh quarrel which might arise between the kings of Egypt and Syria. A suburb of Alexandria, on the east side of the city and near the sea, was allotted for the use of these Jewish citizens. It was afterwards included within the fortifications. Hezekias, a high priest, mentioned in the genealogy of the sons of David, in the First Book of Chronicles (iii. 23); and Meshullam, or Mesollam, a priest, whose name is to be found in the Levitical genealogy in the Book of Nehemiah (xii. 16), removed into Egypt under the patronage of Ptolemy. Meshullam was remarkable for his bravery and his skill as an archer, and it is related of him that on one occasion, as he was riding out with a troop of soldiers, who were watching the flight of a bird that had been let loose by a soothsayer, in order to foretell what was going to happen, Meshullam brought it down with an arrow from his bow, remarking that, as it could not foresee its own death, it certainly knew nothing about the fortunes of the soldiers.

CHAPTER XX.

PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS—B. C. 284—246.

B. C. 284. DURING the long reign of Ptolemy Soter, the Egyptians had been made happy by wise and good laws. Trade had flourished, wealth had increased, and arts and learning had been encouraged. An additional blessing was conferred upon them by the fact that Ptolemy Philadelphus inherited, not only his father's dominions, but also his wisdom. Few princes, indeed, could have ascended a throne under more favourable circumstances, or have been better fitted to derive advantages from them. Philadelphus was born and educated in Cos, a little island on the coast of Caria, in Asia Minor, which had fallen into the hands of Ptolemy Soter, during his war with Antigonus, and was used by him as a royal fortress. It was remarkable as being the first spot in Europe into which the manufacture of silk was introduced. In Cos, Philadelphus carried on his studies, under the direction of Philetas, a distinguished poet and grammarian, and as he grew up, he found himself surrounded by the philosophers and writers with whom his father mixed, on terms of friendship. The tastes thus formed in childhood, continued with him through life, and the arts and learning which had been planted in Egypt by the care of Ptolemy Soter, were fostered and brought to maturity by his son.

Ptolemy Philadelphus may have been in the twenty-third year of his age when his father relinquished his throne; and the proclamation, or ceremony, which accom-

painted this act was a prophecy of the prosperity which was to follow it. All that was dazzling, costly, or curious, all that the wealth of Egypt could buy, or the gratitude of the provinces could give, was brought forth to grace the show, which was based upon the religious belief of the Egyptians, and copied even more from the triumphs of Remeses, than from the processions of Greece.

We read of statues of Osiris, and Isis, of Amun Re, and the goddess Neith, mingled with those of the deities worshipped in Greece. We are told also of dancing satyrs, and crowds of singers and cymbal players, together with two thousand bulls, having gilt horns, crowns, and breastplates; whilst chariots drawn by elephants, with goats, stags, gazelles, wild asses, buffaloes, and ostriches, were introduced as emblematic of the glory of Osiris when he returned from his Indian conquests. Sixty huntsmen, leading two thousand four hundred dogs; a hundred and fifty men bearing trees, in which were fastened parrots and other beautiful birds; a body of Ethiopians, carrying the teeth of six hundred elephants; with troops of foreign animals,—Ethiopian and Arabian sheep, Brahmin bulls, a white bear, leopards, panthers, a camelopard, and a rhinoceros,—proved to the wondering crowd the strangeness and the number of the countries subject to their sovereign's rule.

But the riches displayed in the procession must have been even more surpassing than the variety and singularity of the animals thus collected together. A number of thrones of ivory and gold, amongst which was that of Ptolemy Soter, bearing a crown worth nearly six thousand pounds, three thousand two hundred golden crowns, twenty golden shields, sixty-four suits of golden armour, with forty wagons of silver vessels, twenty of golden vessels, and eighty of costly eastern scents, were displayed to the admiring multitude; escorted by fifty-seven thousand

six hundred foot soldiers, and twenty-three thousand two hundred horse. The procession began moving by torch-light, before daybreak, and before it had all passed the sun set. The course which it took was through the streets of Alexandria, to the royal tent, on the outside of the city. Here also every thing that was most magnificent or rare was collected together in honour of the day. At the public games, twenty golden crowns were given to Ptolemy Soter, twenty-three to his wife, Berenice, and twenty to Ptolemy Philadelphus, besides other costly gifts. Three hundred and fifty thousand pounds were, we are told, spent on the processions and amusements of this coronation day.

But at the time when such greatness and splendour seemed to foretell the permanence of this new dynasty of Egyptian monarchs, the power which was destined to crush it was beginning to display its strength. Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, the young prince who had married the daughter of Berenice, had invaded Italy, under pretence of assisting the Tarentines, a people of Southern Italy, who were then at war with Rome. The Romans had been successful in repelling Pyrrhus, and notwithstanding the connection between the family of the King of Epirus and that of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the Egyptian monarch gave his sympathy to the Republic, and thought it not beneath him to despatch an ambassador to the senate with a message of congratulation and a proposal for a treaty of alliance. The embassy was received in Rome with great joy, and ambassadors, on the part of the Romans, were sent back to Egypt in order to seal the treaty. Philadelphus offered them rich presents; but the citizens of Rome had not yet learned covetousness, and they returned the gifts, declaring that they could receive nothing beyond the thanks of the senate for having done their duty.

At the time of this embassy, the Greek arts were nearly unknown to the Romans, so that the ambassadors must have seen much that was new to them and worthy of being copied, and three years afterwards, when two of them were chosen consuls, they, like the Kings of Egypt, began to coin silver for the first time in Rome.

The treaty between Philadelphus and the Romans was never broken, and when, some years afterwards, the war between Rome and Carthage—usually called the first Punic war—began, and the Carthaginians sent to Alexandria to entreat the loan of a large sum of money, the King of Egypt refused to accede to the request, saying that he would help them against his enemies, but not against his friends.

Philadelphus reigned in comparative peace for many years, and when disturbances did at last arise, they were the result of the ambition and ingratitude of one of his own connections. He had a half brother named Magas, a son of Berenice by her first husband. The affection of the Egyptian queen for her own children seems, on several occasions, to have blinded her to the rightful claims of others. She had succeeded in setting aside Ptolemy Ceraunus in order that her son Philadelphus might be king, and now, so it is said, she favoured the revolt of Magas, who, having been entrusted with the government of the province of Cyrene, desired to make himself an independent sovereign of that country. If Berenice did favour the attempt, she did not live to see its result, for she died about a year before the insurrection actually broke out. Magas marched hastily towards Alexandria, in the hope that some of the restless inhabitants of the great city might join him. He was recalled to Cyrene, however, by some disturbances amongst his own people, and Philadelphus then led his army along the coast against the rebels. But he, like Magas, was stopped by a

fear of rebellion. His army was partly composed of mercenary soldiers, belonging to the wild tribes of the Celts, or Gauls, who, about a century before, had passed the Alps and overrun the north of Italy. This race, which gave a name to the^d province of Galatia, in Asia Minor, and from whom the French, the Highlanders of Scotland, the Irish and the Welsh are descended, were continually sending forth bands of fierce barbarians to fill the ranks of the regular armies of Europe and Asia. Four thousand were to be found amongst the troops which Philadelphus was leading against his brother Magas; but the king's suspicion was aroused, and he believed them to be plotting against him. With cool, deliberate cruelty, which seems strangely incompatible with his character, he led his army back to the marshes of the Delta, and entrapping the 4000 Gauls in one of the small islands, he hemmed them in between the water and the spears of his soldiers, and they all died miserably by famine, by drowning, or by the sword. This massacre, which forms a black spot on the character of Philadelphus, was not the only great crime of which he was guilty. Two other of his half brothers, besides Magas, having engaged in unsuccessful plots, lost their lives by his orders, and it has been said that the name Philadelphus, or brotherly love, was given him as a reproach for these murders. It was, however, really assumed by the king himself, to show his love for his sister and wife Arsinoë.

Magas, who had raised by far the most successful rebellion, was enabled to carry on the war for some years, until at length a treaty of peace was concluded between the two brothers, and sealed by the marriage of the daughter of Magas and the son of Philadelphus. By this means Cyrene again formed part of the Egyptian kingdom.

Another war, between Philadelphus and Antiochus

Theos, King of Syria, was begun, but not pursued very vigorously, for at the time when it broke out Philadelphus was advanced in years, and being too infirm in health to place himself at the head of his armies, was obliged to leave the conduct of the war to his generals. When at length the contest was brought to a close, it was by the means of a most disgraceful bribe. Antiochus had a wife, Laodice, whom he dearly loved; but Philadelphus, with an utter want of feeling and principle, proposed that she should be divorced, and her two children, Seleucus and Antiochus, pronounced illegitimate, and that Antiochus Theos should then marry his own daughter Berenice, with an agreement that her children should inherit the throne. Antiochus Theos was so utterly blinded by political ambition that he actually agreed to this proposal. Philadelphus himself conducted the princess from Pelusium to Seleucia, a maritime city near the mouth of the river Orontes, in Syria, and there the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence, the King of Egypt giving so large a dowry with his daughter that he was nicknamed the dower-giver.

Berenice was a great favourite with her father, and when she afterwards became ill at Antioch, Ptolemy Philadelphus sent her from time to time some water from the Nile for her use, none other being considered by the Egyptians equally wholesome. The king's favour was extended also in a similar case to Antiochus. The Syrian monarch being seized with a severe indisposition, sent to Alexandria for a physician, and Cleombutus of Cos was, by the command of Philadelphus, dispatched to Syria. He effected a cure, and on his return he received from the King of Egypt a hundred talents, or fifteen thousand pounds, as a fee for his journey. The peace between the two countries was strengthened by such acts of kindness, which appear to have been mutual. Philadelphus, whilst

in Syria, begged Antiochus to give him a statue of Diana, which he had seen and greatly admired. The statue was sent to Egypt; but as soon as it arrived Arsinoë, the wife of Philadelphus, fell dangerously ill, and dreamed that the goddess came to her by night, and told her that the illness was sent as a punishment for the wrong done to the statue by its removal from the temple consecrated to her. Philadelphus accordingly sent the statue back to the temple as soon as possible, accompanied with rich presents. A variety of sacrifices were also offered up to appease the displeasure of Diana, but all to no effect. The queen's illness continued to increase, and she died shortly afterwards, leaving Philadelphus inconsolable for her loss.

After the death of Arsinoë, the health of Philadelphus began rapidly to decline. It had always been delicate, and a life of great self-indulgence had undermined his constitution. He often boasted that he had found out the way to live for ever, but a fit of the gout, which sometimes attacked him, made him acknowledge that he was only a man, and even induced him to wish that he could change places with the beggars, whom he saw from his palace windows eating with appetite the garbage on the banks of the Nile.

A delight in ease, luxury and magnificence, and a taste for literature and art, appear to have been the characteristics of Ptolemy Philadelphus. His fleet of eight hundred state barges, with gilt prows and poops, and scarlet awnings upon the decks, was always kept in readiness for the royal processions and religious shows, which displayed his greatness to the people, and this external pomp was a true sign of the internal prosperity of his kingdom. Indeed, if the world's greatness could really give satisfaction, Philadelphus would have had much to cheer him in his old age and his great sorrow. His reign had been

singularly fortunate, and he was permitted to trace the success of the works which he had undertaken for his country's benefit.

He reigned over Egypt, with the neighbouring parts of Arabia, and also over Libya, part of Ethiopia, Phœnicia, Cœle-Syria, Pamphilia, Cilicia, Lycia, Caria, Cyprus and the isles of the Cyclades. The island of Rhodes and many of the cities of Greece were bound to him by gratitude for past help, and hope of future assistance. The wealthy cities of Tyre and Sidon did homage to him, and his crowned head was stamped upon their coins. The forces of Egypt consisted, in his reign, of upwards of 200,000 foot, with 20,000 horse; the treasury was said to contain above a hundred millions of gold and silver, in addition to a yearly income of two millions and a quarter; besides a provision of corn raised by a tax, and amounting to five millions of bushels. And whilst the country was thus extensive and wealthy, the people were happy and well governed. Justice was administered to the Egyptians according to their own laws, and to the Greeks of Alexandria according to the Macedonian laws. Upper Egypt, which had been at one time much infested by robbers and marauders, was, by the vigilance of Philadelphus, rendered as quiet and safe as the Delta. The trade down the Nile was larger than it had ever been before. Ports for the furtherance of trade, and named after the king's mother, Berenice, and his wife, Arsinoë, were made on the coast of the Red Sea, and the profits gained from this commerce were enormous; whilst the gold of the country was so plentiful that one of the new ports was known as the Nubian, or Golden Berenice, from the large supply of gold dug from the mines.

Philadelphus also built another city called Ptolemais. It was separated from the Golden Berenice by one of the Ethiopian forests, but it was little more than a port, from

which the hunting parties went out to catch elephants for the Egyptian armies. Philadelphus tried to command, to persuade, and bribe the neighbouring tribes not to kill these animals for food, but they replied that if he ordered them the Kingdom of Egypt, with all its wealth, they would not give up the pleasure of catching and eating elephants. The Ethiopian forests supplied the Egyptian monarchs with about one elephant for every thousand men, which was the number then usually allowed to armies. Before this time Asia had been the only country from which these animals were imported for warlike purposes. It is supposed that about the same period the Carthaginians began to employ elephants in a similar way.



CHAPTER XXI

INTERNAL CONDITION OF EGYPT UNDER PTOLEMY
PHILADELPHUS.

THE attention which Ptolemy Philadelphus paid to the externals of religious worship in Egypt was equal to that which he bestowed upon the commercial prosperity of the country; but the legends of the Greeks were rapidly mixing with the ancient mysteries of the Egyptians. The worship of Isis was blended with that of Aphrodite—the worship of Osiris with that of Adonis, the favourite of Aphrodite. Philadelphus began the building of a magnificent temple to Isis on the ruins of an older temple probably overthrown by the Persians. It was finished some reigns later, and is still the wonder and the admiration of travellers, standing, as it does, in the Island of Philæ, the most beautiful spot in Egypt, where the bend of the river, just above the cataracts, forms a quiet lake, surrounded on all sides by fantastic cliffs of red granite. This temple was one of the places in which Osiris was said to be buried, and here the priests every day poured from the sacred vessels three hundred and sixty libations of milk to his honour, and in token of their grief for his sufferings. None but priests ever set foot on this sacred island, and no oath was so binding as that sworn in the name of “him who lies buried at Philæ.”

The priests of this temple of Isis, in Philæ, lived in cells within the courtyard, the remains of which are still to be seen. They showed their zeal for their gods by the amount of want which they were able to endure. Clean-

liness was a luxury which they thought it right to shun, and they added to their discomfort by cutting their flesh from time to time with knives; whilst their idea of the highest religious duty was that of sitting upon the ground in idleness with the chin resting on the knees.

Another temple, built by Philadelphus, was erected in Alexandria to the honour of his father and mother. Their statues, made of ivory and gold, were placed in it. An order was then issued that they should be worshipped like the gods and other kings of the country; and having completed the building of the lighthouse on the Island of Pharos, which was placed there as a guide to ships when entering the harbour of Alexandria at night, Philadelphus dedicated it to these new deities the gods Soteres—as Ptolemy Soter and Berenice were called in all public writings—and decreed that they should thenceforth be the gods of the port and of its shipping. The royal burial-place in Alexandria, though begun by Ptolemy Soter, was finished by Philadelphus, who removed thither the body of Alexander from Memphis, where it had been first deposited. The great conqueror's embalmed remains were placed in a golden sarcophagus, and pilgrims came to bow before it in reverence.

But amongst all the exertions made by Ptolemy Philadelphus for the advancement of civilisation in Egypt, none were so important as the encouragement which, following the example of his father, he bestowed upon learning and the arts. Aristarchus, the first astronomer who is known to have taken the true view of the solar system, was one of the Alexandrian professors. According to his teaching, the sun was the centre round which the earth moved in a circle, and he appears to have foreseen that even in after ages he should scarcely be able to measure the distance of the fixed stars, for he stated that the earth's yearly path bore no greater proportion to the

hollow globe of the heavens in which the stars were set, than the point without size in the centre of a circle does to its circumference. But the work in which he suggested these great truths is lost, and the astronomer who succeeded him clung to the belief that the earth was the centre round which the sun moved. The library of Alexandria by this time contained 200,000 rolls of papyrus, which, however, would not have been equal to more than 10,000 printed volumes. These books were all written in Greek, for the Greeks did not study foreign languages, and considered the Egyptian writings barbarous.

Demetrius Phalereus, an Athenian, who had once been the chief ruler in Athens, was the head of the Alexandrian library when it was first established. Having been banished his country during some political disturbances, he fled to Egypt, where he was well received by Ptolemy Soter, who highly appreciated his eloquence and literary tastes. Demetrius not only advised Ptolemy Soter what books he should buy, but which he should read, and it is to the credit of both that the volumes which were recommended were those which, from their praise of freedom and hatred of tyrants, few persons would even speak of in the presence of a king. But Demetrius Phalereus was not equally favoured by Philadelphus. When Ptolemy Soter first proposed to set aside the claims of his son Ceraunus, he consulted Demetrius as to the wisdom of his idea. Demetrius gave it as his opinion that the crown ought to be left to the eldest son, and that wars would arise between the children if the succession were differently arranged. Philadelphus was not sufficiently generous to pardon this advice, and on the death of Ptolemy Soter Demetrius lost his situation as head of the Museum, and was ordered to leave Alexandria. He died in disgrace, and indeed, according to one account, he was put to death by the bite of an asp in obedience to the king's orders.

It seems strange that whilst learning was generously encouraged in Egypt, there had not been one amongst the numerous authors and writers, who sought the king's patronage, who up to this time had deemed it worth his while to search into the early history of the country. Barbarians, it had been supposed, were not worthy of the notice of men who called themselves Macedonians. Philadelphus, however, thought otherwise, and by his command Manetho, an Egyptian, wrote in Greek a history of Egypt, copied from the hieroglyphical writing on the temples, and dedicated it to the king. Manetho was a priest of Heliopolis, which, from the time of Moses, had been the great seat of Egyptian learning. It was so still, for those branches of study which were not cultivated by the Alexandrian Greeks, and the work of Manetho was doubtless of great value. It has, however, unfortunately been destroyed, though his list of the Egyptian dynasties is retained by other writers, and Josephus, the Jewish historian, quotes him as a pagan and therefore a disinterested witness to the truth of the Jewish history.

But the most important result of the attention bestowed by Philadelphus upon literature was the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language—a version now known as the Septuagint. The favour shown to the Jews by Ptolemy Soter was continued to them by his son; and the idea of this translation of the Sacred Books having been suggested to the king, he himself wrote to Eleazar, the High Priest, at Jerusalem, asking him to employ learned men, fit for the work, who might make a Greek version of the Scriptures to be placed in the Alexandrian library. Costly presents were despatched with this letter, and as a still further inducement to the High Priest to listen to the proposition, Philadelphus declared his intention of releasing from slavery 120,000 Jews who had been made slaves, and were scattered over Egypt. Three pounds,

or thirty shekels, the sum fixed by the Jewish law as the price of a slave, was to be paid for each slave out of the royal treasury. The release of these slaves was greatly owing to the intercession of Aristæus, a Greek Jew, highly esteemed by Philadelphus, and to whom the mission to Elcazar was entrusted.

The answer of the High Priest was in every respect favourable. Much gratitude was expressed by him for the favour shown to his unfortunate countrymen, and seventy elders were chosen who were considered competent to undertake the task of translation. They carried with them to Alexandria presents for Philadelphus, and the roll of parchment containing the laws written in golden characters. The king, when the roll was presented to him, asked many questions about it, and remained for some time examining with wonder and admiration the thinness of the leaves and the bad condition they were in, and then addressing the elders with respect and courtesy, invited them to dine with him, that he might have an opportunity of conferring with them as to the mode in which the important undertaking before them should be carried out. The dinner was provided with great care according to the Jewish customs; for so many persons from various countries met at the court of Philadelphus that an officer was especially appointed whose duty it was to see that all strangers were entertained according to the habits of their own land. On this occasion the king was so delighted with the conversation of the elders, that for twelve days he showed them similar hospitality. Their work began very soon after their arrival. They were conducted to a solitary house on the island of Pharos, and there they remained till it was completed. The only variety in their life was a visit paid to Philadelphus every morning, after which they returned to the island, carefully purified themselves, and devoted themselves to their im-

portant task. The translators divided the work amongst themselves, and when each had finished his share it was laid before a meeting of the seventy, and the whole was afterwards published by authority. The elders, after the completion of their labours, went back to Jerusalem laden with presents from Philadelphus, and with the promise that if at any time they would return to Alexandria they should be welcomed and honoured as before.

The Septuagint bears in every part the strongest marks of the country in which it was written. It contains many Egyptian words, and gives the Coptic names for the Egyptian towns. The chief disagreement between the original and the translation is in the chronology, which the translators, very improperly, undertook to correct, in order to make it agree more exactly with the received history of Egypt. Their reverence for the sacred word Jehovah was such that they did not venture to write it in Greek letters, but, in its place, they called the Almighty by the name of the Lord. A similar exchange of words may be remarked in our English translation. By this translation the Bible became known for the first time to the Greek philosophers. We do not indeed hear that they at once read and noticed it; but that it had a silent effect on their opinions, is evident from the doctrines of the Platonists, a sect named after the Greek philosopher Plato, which soon afterwards became celebrated in Alexandria. A disciple of Plato was present at the first entertainment given by Philadelphus to the Jewish elders, and appears to have been much impressed by the truths which were then set before him.

This spread of Jewish opinions amongst the pagans must be regarded as a great step in the history of civilisation. More just views of the Great Creator and of the duties of man were thus gained by many philosophers, and a higher tone of morality was introduced into Alexandria. The

change was much needed, for the moral philosophy of the Museum was by no means of that lofty nature which raises the character of its followers. Virtue and purity did not flourish there equally with mathematics and science.

The worship of the intellect was indeed the great characteristic of the day; and as the number of those who could read was small, other means were taken to meet the general thirst for knowledge. Public readings in the theatre were set on foot by Philadelphus, who employed two philosophers to read aloud the works of Homer and Herodotus. These public readings, which were common throughout Greece and its colonies, had a great effect upon the style of the Greek authors. They wrote rather to be listened to than to be read, and this was one amongst the causes of the elegance and simplicity of style for which they were so remarkable.

One person, however, brought to Alexandria by the fame of the king's bounty, did not share his admiration for Homer. This was Zeilus, the grammarian, whose ill-natured criticisms on the writings of the earliest and most admired of poets earned for him the name of *Homermastis*, or "The scourge of Homer." He read his criticisms to Philadelphus, but the king was greatly displeased with his unfair mode of finding fault, and when Zeilus was in distress he refused to relieve him, saying that whilst hundreds earned a livelihood by pointing out the beauties of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in their public readings, surely one person, who was so much wiser, might be able to live by pointing out the defects of these poems.

Philadelphus was not less fond of paintings and statues than of books, and, on one occasion, was induced to join a league formed by several of the Greek states, chiefly because he was won over by presents of pictures. Aratus,

a citizen of Sicyon, one of the most ancient cities of Greece, had laid a plot to free his country from the power of the Macedonian monarchs, and for this object he wished to secure the aid of Philadelphus. Aratus was an acknowledged judge of paintings, and Sicyon was then the chief seat of Grecian art. Philadelphus, at first, considered the plans of the Sicyonian too wild to be countenanced, but when Aratus, by his courage and talent, had raised Sicyon to a level with the first states of Greece, the King of Egypt was more inclined to listen to him, and, at length, his favor was entirely gained by the gift of some pictures, painted by Pamphilus, the master and Melanthus, the fellow pupil of Apelles. Pamphilus was famed for his perspective. It was through his influence that drawing was taught in Greece as part of a liberal education, and he is said to have received from his own pupils the sum of £1500 a year. After receiving the pictures so highly valued, Philadelphus not only joined the Achaian league against Macedonia, which was headed by Aratus, but also contributed nine thousand pounds towards the expenses of the war; stipulating, however, that in carrying it on, both by sea and land, the Greeks should obey the orders sent from Alexandria.

When young, Philadelphus had married Arsinoë, the daughter of Lysimachus, King of Thrace, and by her he had three children, Ptolemy Euergetes, who succeeded him, Lysimachus, and Berenice. It was many years after his accession to the throne that he resolved to marry his half-sister, also named Arsinoë, and who, as it has been said, was the widow of Ptolemy Ceraunus. The first Arsinoë plotted against her rival, and the conspiracy being discovered by Philadelphus, she was banished, and the widow of Ceraunus was taken to be his wife. The similarity of names, and the intricate connections and relationships in these marriages, are sources of great

confusion. The first Arsinoë was the daughter of Lysimachus, the second had been his wife before she married her brothers, Ceraunus and Philadelphus. The second Arsinoë appears to have been a woman of an enlarged mind. Her husband highly valued her, and as her own children, by Lysimachus, had been put to death by Ceraunus, she gave her whole affection to her step-children, and treated them with all the kindness of a mother.

In the Egyptian inscriptions, Philadelphus and the second Arsinoë are always called the brother gods, and on the coins they are named Adelphi, the brothers. The affection of Philadelphus for his wife was evinced after her death by a tomb which he built for her in Alexandria. It was called the Arsinoëum. He set up in it an obelisk eighty cubits high, which, in the reign of Caligula, was carried to Rome, and now stands in the piazza of St. Peter's.

Philadelphus is also said to have listened to a proposal made by Dinochares, the architect, to build a room of loadstone in Arsinoë's tomb, so that an iron statue of the queen should hang in the air between the floor and the roof. But the death of the king and of the architect occurred before this experiment was tried. A statue of Arsinoë was, however, placed in the Arsinoëum. It was six feet high, and carved out of a most remarkable block of topaz, which, in the preceding reign, had been presented to Berenice, the mother of Philadelphus, by the prefect of the Troglodytic coast. The name Troglodytic was applied by the Greek geographers to various uncivilized people, who had no abodes but caves. It was especially given to the inhabitants of the western coast of the Red Sea, along the shores of Upper Egypt and Ethiopia.

The splendour of the court of Philadelphus, joined to the system of good government which he had inherited

from his father, made his reign so remarkable that his name passed into a proverb. In after ages, if any work of art was deemed admirable for its good taste or costliness, it was called *Philadelphian*. And this encouragement which he bestowed upon genius was so beneficial, even to the native Egyptians, that the native arts were more flourishing under his patronage than they had ever been since the fall of the kings of Thebes.

Ptolemy Philadelphus died in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, and about the sixty-first of his age, leaving his kingdom as powerful, and even more wealthy, than when it came to him from his father.



CHAPTER XXII.

PTOLEMY EUERGETES—B. C. 246—221.

B. C. 246. **PTOLEMY**, the eldest son of Philadelphus, succeeded his father on the throne of Egypt, and, after a short time, took the name of Euergetes. The beginning of his reign was troubled, for the selfish policy of his father, in regard to the marriage of his daughter Berenice with Antiochus Theos, King of Syria, brought its natural consequence of evil. Antiochus had indeed consented to divorce his favourite wife, Laodice, in order to conciliate the King of Egypt; but, notwithstanding this act of cruel injustice, his affections were still true to her, and he no sooner heard of the death of Philadelphus than he resolved to recall her. The trust of Laodice in her husband's constancy had, however, received too severe a shock to be restored. Antiochus might indeed be willing to acknowledge her again as his wife, but she felt assured that, on the next claim of political ambition, she and her children were likely to be again discarded, whilst the agreement which had been made between Antiochus and Philadelphus at the time of the marriage of Berenice would effectually bar the way to the inheritance of her son in the event of the king's death. By that agreement it had been stipulated that the children of Antiochus and Berenice should succeed to the throne. Berenice had a son, and there appeared therefore no probability that the ambition of Laodice for her own child would be satisfied.

But the injured wife of Antiochus was not contented

thus to see her brightest hopes frustrated. Reckless of crime, equally with those who had caused her misfortunes, she did not hesitate to revenge herself by an act of the foulest treachery. She returned to Antiochus when he claimed her; but she was no sooner reinstated in her position as his wife, than she caused him to be poisoned. In his last agonies she watched by his bedside, and when she saw that he was really dead, she ordered the body to be removed, and a person named Artemon, who greatly resembled Antiochus in his features and the tones of his voice, to be placed in the bed. Artemon had been well instructed in the part he was to perform, and acted strictly in accordance with the wishes of Laodice. The king's death was carefully concealed, and a few persons were admitted to the chamber in which Artemon lay. The pretended monarch then issued his last commands to the nobles, in whose hands the government was chiefly entrusted. He commended to them his dear Laodice and her children, and directed that his eldest son, Seleucus Callinicus, should be received as his successor. When this was done, there was no longer any reason to conceal the king's death. It was announced to the people, and Seleucus was at once acknowledged as King of Syria, whilst his brother Antiochus Hierax was entrusted with the government of the provinces of Asia Minor.

The crime which Laodice had perpetrated was necessarily followed by others. Whilst Berenice and her son lived, the throne of Seleucus could never be considered safe, and Laodice accordingly concerted measures with the king for the destruction of their hated rivals. The friends of Berenice warned her of her danger, and she fled with her son to Daphne, in Syria, a beautiful spot about five miles south of the city of Antioch. Daphne had been the royal residence of the Kings of Syria, since

the reign of Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the kingdom, after the division of Alexander's empire. Groves of laurels, and cypresses, watered by fresh springs, and forming a kind of park or pleasure ground to the city, made it the favourite resort of the people of Antioch; and here, doubtless, Berenice, in the days of her prosperity, had passed many hours of enjoyment. But it proved no place of safety now. The troops of Laodice and Seleucus besieged it, and the only hope of the unfortunate Berenice was in the help to be expected from her brother Ptolemy Euergetes, and from several of the cities of Asia Minor, who, being touched by her misfortunes, formed a confederacy, and dispatched a body of troops to her relief. Neither the forces of the confederate cities, nor the powerful army of Euergetes, were, however, able to effect the freedom of Berenice. Before they reached Antioch, the dreadful tidings were brought to the King of Egypt that his unhappy sister and her son had been treacherously betrayed into the hands of Laodice, and, together with the Egyptians who had accompanied her to Daphne, murdered in the most inhuman manner.

The indignation of Euergetes was roused by this intelligence to the extremest pitch, and his resolution to revenge the death of his sister was prompt and eager. The confederate troops also shared his feelings, and the sympathy of the country generally was soon found to be on his side. The barbarity of Laodice and Seleucus Callinicus had alienated the affections of the people, and the King of Egypt, thus supported, found little difficulty in making himself master of all Syria and Cilicia. Laodice was taken prisoner and put to death, and Seleucus was unable to prevent the victorious Euergetes from crossing the Euphrates, and subduing all the country as far as Babylon and the Tigris. He might probably have

gone still farther, and taken possession of every province belonging to Syria, but for the tidings of a sedition in Egypt, which compelled him to return to that country.

On his homeward march, Euergetes passed through Jerusalem, where he offered sacrifices in the Temple, and returned thanks to Heaven for his victories. It does not appear that this action was any recognition of the sovereignty of the One True God; but Euergetes had been accustomed to worship the Greek and Egyptian deities indiscriminately, and as Palestine was part of his kingdom, it was natural that he should also pay his devotions to the God of the Jews.

The events connected with the wars between Egypt and Syria, at this period, are minutely foretold in the eleventh chapter of the Prophecy of Daniel. The prophet describes the breaking up of Alexander's empire, and says that it "shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven, and not to his posterity;" he then mentions the power of the King of the South, or of Egypt, and foretells the agreement between Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antiochus Theos, who is called the King of the North, which took place on the marriage of Berenice. This agreement, however, he declares, shall not prosper, for "she shall not retain the power of the arm, but shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her," or, as it is in the margin, "he whom she brought forth;"—prophecies fulfilled by the betrayal and murder of Berenice, her attendants and her son, after they had taken refuge in Daphne. The murder of Berenice was, however, to be avenged by Ptolemy Euergetes, her brother, for "of a branch of her roots" was one to stand up and prevail against the King of the North (Seleucus Callinicus), and carry the gods and the princes of Syria captives into Egypt, "with their precious vessels of silver and of gold." The prophecy is continued at great length, but its

fulfilment is to be found chiefly in the history of the Kings of Syria.

The gold and silver carried back by Ptolemy to Egypt after this war amounted in value to about six millions sterling, and the sacred vases and the statues of different gods were no less than two thousand five hundred. Some of these statues were, it is said, the same which had been, in former years, taken from Egypt by Cambysea. They were now restored to the Egyptian temples, and it was in gratitude for this action that the priests bestowed upon the king the epithet of Euergetes, or the Benefactor, a name which it has been necessary to use from the commencement of his reign in order to distinguish him from his predecessors. Ptolemy Euergetes appears to have paid special honour to the temples and the gods of Egypt. He enlarged the temple of Karnac, at Thebes, and a representation of him is still to be seen on the walls, handing an offering to his father and mother, or the brother gods. Besides undertaking other works of a similar nature, he built a temple to Osiris at Canopus, on the mouth of the Nile, and dedicated it to the god in a Greek inscription on a plate of gold, in the names of himself and his wife Berenice, the daughter of Magus, King of Cyrene. Berenice has been immortalised in a very singular manner. She was, as it would appear, devotedly attached to Euergetes, and whilst he was absent in Syria she sacrificed a bull to the gods, and vowed that if her husband were restored to her in safety she would cut off her beautiful hair, and hang it up in the temple as a thank-offering. On the return of Euergetes this vow was faithfully kept, and, in consequence of the sacrifice she had made, Berenice was regarded by the whole court as a heroine. Soon afterwards, by some unknown accident, this hair was lost, and Euergetes was extremely offended with the priests for their negligence. He was,

however, appeased by a flattering suggestion made by Conon, of Samos, an artful courtier, and a great astronomer. Conon was at that time busied in noting the places of the fixed stars, and grouping together into a constellation a cluster which the earlier astronomers had left unnamed. When the queen's hair was lost, he marked out the constellation, and announced it to the world as the Coma Berenices, or the Hair of Berenice, which had been taken from earth and transplanted to the skies. The name was adopted by several other astronomers of the day, and has ever since been retained.

Ptolemy Euergetes having left Syria, Seleucus Callinicus made every effort to recover the allegiance of his revolted cities, and not without ultimate success, although the struggle was for a time doubtful. The inhabitants of two cities in Asia Minor, Smyrna and Magnesia, being personally attached to him, formed a confederacy in his favour, and entered into a treaty by which they mutually agreed to support him. The words of this treaty were graven on a large marble column, which now stands in the area before the Theatre at Oxford. It was brought from Asia by the Earl of Arundel in the reign of Charles the Second.

Having regained some portion of his power in his own land, Seleucus naturally desired to revenge himself upon Euergetes, and, for this purpose, he besought the assistance of his brother, Antiochus Hierax, who was in command of an army in Asia Minor. His purpose was, however, never carried into effect, for Euergetes, hearing that the two brothers were about to join their forces, thought it better to conclude a truce with Seleucus for ten years. After events proved that Antiochus Hierax was a deceitful traitor, for he turned his arms against his brother, strove to rob him of his crown, and, being defeated, fled to Egypt, expecting to be well received by Euergetes.

The Egyptian monarch, however, ordered him to be closely guarded; and though Antiochus afterwards made his escape from captivity, yet, in his flight, he lost his life by unknown hands.

Euergetes now finding himself at peace with his neighbours on the coasts of the Mediterranean, began to make preparations for a war in the South against Ethiopia and Abyssinia, and with this object in view, he added to his army a body of five hundred Greek cavalry, one hundred of whom he clothed—horses as well as men—in thick linen cloth, as a protection from the arrows of the enemy. The horses were so covered that no part of them except their eyes could be seen. With forces thus carefully fitted for service, there was but little difficulty in conquering the wild tribes of Ethiopia, and Euergetes even made himself master for the time of the highlands of Abyssinia. At Adule, a port in latitude 15° , he set up a large chair, or throne, of white marble, to commemorate his victories, but the distance from Egypt was too great to permit the monarchs who succeeded him to retain their hold on the country, and two hundred years afterwards the conquests of Euergetes were so entirely forgotten that when the Roman geographer, Strabo, was making inquiries about this region, the marble throne was mentioned as having been set up by the hero Sesostris, to whom it was usual to give the credit of so many wonderful conquests.

During this period the Jews, whose country had continued to be a province of Egypt, lived in tranquillity and with very little loss of freedom. They were allowed to govern themselves, and to choose their own High Priests; the chief token of subjection required of them being the payment of a yearly tribute, sent to the Egyptian monarch at Alexandria. A portion of this tribute was collected from the poll-tax of half a shekel, or about

eight pence, paid by every male above twenty, and by the Mosaic law appropriated for the service of the Temple. (Exodus xix. 13—16.) It is this tax to which allusion is made in the Gospels, when we read of the receiver of tribute at Capernaum demanding money from our LORD. (Matt. xi. 17—24.)

Latterly it had been the custom for the High Priest to farm this tax, or in other words to pay a certain fixed sum himself, and then when the tax was actually collected, to repay himself, and keep the surplus. After Judæa had become an Egyptian province, and when in consequence the poll-tax, then valued at twenty talents or £3000, ceased to be appropriated to the service of the Temple, but formed instead part of the national tribute, the High Priest was responsible to the king for its payment. Onias, the High Priest at the close of the reign of Euergetes, was a weak and covetous old man, utterly regardless of the power of Egypt, and for a considerable time he refused to pay the tribute. Euergetes was extremely indignant, and sent Athenion, one of his courtiers, as ambassador to Jerusalem, to insist that the arrears should be made up, threatening also in case of refusal to despatch a body of troops, who should take possession of the country and expel the inhabitants. Onias still expressed himself regardless of the king's displeasure, and the people began to be greatly alarmed. A young man named Joseph, who was a nephew of Onias, and resided at a little village in the country, hearing of the arrival of the Egyptian ambassador and the reckless obstinacy of his uncle, determined to go into the city and strive to move Onias, if possible, to submission. He found the High Priest firm in his obstinacy, declaring that he would neither give the money nor make any effort to induce Euergetes to remit even a portion of it; and, after much

argument and entreaty, Joseph could only succeed in obtaining a tacit permission to go himself to Alexandria, and endeavour to avert the king's anger.

The excitement of the Jewish people was in some degree allayed when they learnt the intended mission to Egypt, for which preparations were immediately made; and the Egyptian ambassador, Athenion, after being sumptuously entertained at Jerusalem for several days, departed, carrying back with him the assurance that Joseph would speedily follow. In that short time, Joseph, by his courtesy and wisdom, had gained a friend in Athenion, and when he set out on his expedition it was with great hopes of success, from the support which the ambassador had promised to give him.

About the same time several of the most wealthy and influential persons in Phœnicia were likewise travelling to Egypt, with the intention of offering to the king certain terms for farming the revenues of different provinces. They met Joseph on the road; but although the Jewish ambassador had been carefully provided with the money and treasures which it was probable he would need for the furtherance of his object, very little had been expended on the externals of his retinue, and the haughty Phœnician nobles looked with scorn at his humble suite, though they did not refuse to enter into conversation with him, and discuss the object of their journey. On arriving at Alexandria the travellers learnt that the king was at Memphis, and Joseph immediately resolved to go thither. On the way he met Energetes and Berenice in their chariot. They were about to return to Alexandria, and were accompanied by Joseph's friend Athenion, who had already prepared them for the arrival of the young Jew, and greatly prepossessed them in his favour. The king saluted Joseph courteously, and invited him into his chariot, when he immediately began to expostulate with him upon the con-

duct of his uncle. The only excuse which could be offered for Onias was the infirmity of mind resulting from age, and this was put forth by Joseph so earnestly and winningly that the heart of Euergetes was completely softened; and, captivated by the manner and conversation of the young Jew, he ordered him an apartment in the palace at Alexandria, and allowed him a place at his table.

The Phœnician nobles, who were aware of the favour shown to Joseph, and remembered the contempt which they had themselves evinced for him, were in consequence jealous and dissatisfied; but they were by no means prepared for the boldness which was soon to expose their own dishonesty of purpose, and raise Joseph still higher in the king's esteem. When the day arrived on which the question as to the farming of the taxes was to be decided, the principal persons of each province offered themselves as purchasers. But when the taxes on Coele-Syria, Phœnicia, Judea and Samaria, which were valued at eight thousand talents, or one million two hundred thousand pounds, were put up to auction, Joseph came forward and accused the purchasers of combining together to defraud the king, offering at the same time to give double the sum if he might himself be permitted to undertake the farming of this portion of the revenue. Euergetes listened willingly to the proposal, but inquired of Joseph what persons he could find to be his security for the payment of the money. The young Jew answered without hesitation that he would provide good persons and just, against whom the king could make no objection. Euergetes again requested to know who these persons might be. "Yourself, O king! and your queen," replied Joseph; and the king, delighted with his quickness and openness, immediately acceded to the proposal which had been made. The farming of the revenues was granted to

him without any security being required, and the office was held by him for twenty-two years.

The government of Euergetes in this and in other instances appears to have been carried on frankly and generously; and whilst he was watchful over his provinces, he did not neglect his allies. The assistance which Ptolemy Philadelphus had given to the Grecian states, who were striving to free themselves from the power of Macedon, was continued by Euergetes; but the gold of Egypt was unable to effect the restoration of a country weakened by internal divisions. After a lingering struggle the whole of the Peloponnesus became subject to Macedonia. Cleomenes, King of Sparta, made a last brave effort for his country's freedom, but was totally defeated at Sellasia, a town in Laconia, and he then sailed for Alexandria, where he was kindly received by Euergetes, who gave him twenty-four talents, or four thousand pounds, for his maintenance in Egypt till he should be sent back to Greece with a fleet and army to regain his throne.

Alexandria, during the reign of Euergetes, still continued to be the centre of learning for the world, but it is singular to remark the influence of the government upon the science and literature of the day. The well-paid philosophers of the Museum, who wrote with a view to royal favour and reward, were not likely to equal the great men of Greece, who had studied and taught solely from the love of knowledge and of honour, and who had no other aim than that of being useful to their hearers, and looked for no reward beyond their love and esteem. The Alexandrian writers did not succeed in poetry, oratory, or history. Of Callimachus, one of the most distinguished poets of those days, it has been said that he was to be admired more for his industry and art than for his

taste and genius. Oratory could scarcely flourish under a despotic monarch, and history was not valued or encouraged, because it was required to be false and flattering. Geometry, geography, astronomy, anatomy and criticism were the favourite studies in Alexandria, and in these sciences an extraordinary proficiency was attained. Eratosthenes of Cyrene, the inventor of astronomical geography, was at this time at the head of the mathematical school. He was the first who fixed the place of a city upon the earth by means of its latitude, which he learned from the length of the sun's shadow at noon on the equinoctial days. This observation he named the Theory of Shadows, and from this theory he learned that the earth is a ball, and proceeded then to determine its size. Up to this time maps had been drawn without any help from astronomy, and the distances in miles had been mostly laid down by day's journeys, or by measuring along the crooked roads. The knowledge acquired by Eratosthenes enabled him to rectify the mistakes which had arisen in consequence of these imperfect measurements, and he justly earned the name of Surveyor of the World. In pure mathematics, however, he did not rank so high. Hipparchus, the Greek astronomer, said of him that he wrote mathematically about geography, and geographically about mathematics. Besides his geographical and astronomical works, Eratosthenes wrote a history of Egypt to correct the errors of Manethos; but, by comparing the two with the hieroglyphical monuments, it is easy to understand how the boldness of Eratosthenes sometimes called down the blame of Hipparchus, who was styled "the lover of truth." The small remains of his history are, however, of some use; for while Manetho's lists give us merely the separate dynasties of the several cities, without distinguishing between the kings who reigned over all Egypt and those who were, strictly speaking, only rulers of provinces, Eratosthenes

undertakes to give a regular list of the Kings of Thebes alone.

It is a matter for wonder and regret that neither Manetho, an Egyptian priest who wrote in Greek, nor Eratosthenes, a Greek who understood Egyptian, should have taken the trouble to lay open to their readers the peculiarities of the hieroglyphics. Through all the reigns of the Ptolemies, the titles and praises of the kings of that dynasty were carved upon the temples in the sacred characters. The histories both of Manetho and Eratosthenes were translated from similar inscriptions, and yet such was the absence of curiosity on the part of the grammarians of Alexandria, and such their want of respect for the philosophy of the Egyptians, that the language of the hieroglyphics still remained unknown except to the class of priests. Another of the distinguished men of Alexandria, Conon, the astronomer, has already been mentioned as belonging to the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes. No writings, by which an opinion may be formed of his merits, have come down to the present day, but they were highly valued by his immediate successors. Conon was the friend of the great mathematician, Archimedes of Syracuse, who came to Alexandria for the purpose of studying under him. The visit of Archimedes was of great use to Egypt, for the clever mathematician invented a screw pump, by which the more distant fields of the valley of the Nile, which could not be reached by the inundations, were watered artificially with greater ease than had ever been done before.

The reign of Ptolemy Euergetes lasted twenty-five years, and may be considered a period of unclouded prosperity. Egypt was at the height of its power and wealth, and although many of the victories of which the king boasted were like letters written in the sand, of which the traces were soon lost, yet he was by far the

greatest monarch of his day. As a proof of the wise government of the early Ptolemies, we find that justice was administered fairly by judges, who were independent of the crown; and even centuries after, when the kingdom had greatly degenerated, it was part of the oath taken by a judge on entering upon his office that if ordered by the king to do what was wrong he would not obey. Ptolemy Euergetes left two sons, Ptolemy and Magas, the elder of whom succeeded him.



CHAPTER XXIII.

PTOLEMY PHILOPATOR—B. C. 221—204.

THE bright pages in the history of the Ptolemies end with Ptolemy Evergetes, for Ptolemy Philopator, or the father-loving, inherited none of the great qualities by which his predecessors had won and guarded the crown they wore. Philopator was thirty-four years of age when he ascended the throne, and found himself master of Ethiopia, Cyrene, Phœnicia, Cœle-Syria, part of Upper Syria, Cyprus, Rhodes, the cities along the coast of Asia Minor, from Pamphilia to Lysimachia, near the Thracian Chersonesus, together with the towns of Ænos and Maronea, in Thrace. Amongst all these provinces and cities there were many across the Mediterranean which had willingly sought the protection of the kings of Egypt, whose naval power was then the greatest in the world, and who, by little more than a message, could often warn off invaders that might be about to attack them. But this sense of safety was soon to cease, for the habits of Philopator led him to disregard the cares of government. The army and fleet were allowed to decay, and the foreign provinces, which had been hitherto regarded as the bulwarks of Egypt, were only half guarded. The influence of Egypt did not, however, decline suddenly. The wise government of the first Ptolemies had established the throne upon too firm a basis to be at once shaken, even by the crimes and follies of a prince like Philopator; but the end might with confidence have been prophesied from

the very commencement of the reign of that monarch. Philopator's first act of sovereignty was a crime. He called together his council, and asked their advice as to the expediency of putting to death his mother Berenice and his brother Magas. Their offence was that they were too popular with the army, and the council was called to decide whether it would be safe to have them killed.

Only one amongst the persons thus summoned dared to raise his voice against the meditated crime. This was Cleomenes, the banished King of Sparta, who had been admitted to the council, and who ventured boldly to assert that the throne would be still safer if there were more brothers to stand between the king and the daring hopes of any traitor who might venture to rebel against him. Philopator's minister, Sosibius, opposed the opinion of Cleomenes. The mercenary troops, he said, could not be trusted whilst Magas was alive; to which the King of Sparta replied that more than three thousand of these troops were Greeks, inhabitants of the Peloponnesus, and that it was his influence, rather than that of Magas, which would lead them. But neither the claims of policy nor of humanity were likely to be listened to by a monarch infatuated by jealous fear. The council of Cleomenes was rejected, and Berenice and Magas were put to death. After this act it is scarcely a matter of surprise that the suspicions of the people attributed to Philopator another crime, which there was no evidence to prove. The death of Ptolemy Euergetes had, there was every reason to suppose, been the result of natural causes, but when his son, after murdering his mother and his brother, took the name of Philopator, or father-loving, it was said that he had also been the murderer of his father, and had assumed this title as a cloak to cover the deed.

The speech of Cleomenes, made in the sincerity of his heart, was the signal for the downfall of his brightest

hopes. He had implied that if he chose he could secure the allegiance of the mercenary troops, and lead them to rebel against the king, and the boast, although made innocently, rankled in the recollection both of Philopator and Sosibius.

The death of Antigonus, King of Macedon, about this time, offered an opportunity for the restoration of the banished King of Sparta, and the furtherance of the independence of Greece; but these objects were not of interest and importance to Philopator as they had been to his father. On the contrary, he dreaded to restore to power a prince who, having lived so long in Egypt, was thoroughly acquainted with the weakness as well as the strength of the country, and might, at any moment, assist its enemies by his knowledge and advice. Cleomenes made a request for troops and supplies, to aid him in his projects, but he could obtain no support. He then entreated that he might be at least permitted to depart with his family, and take his own measures, as opportunity might offer, for repossessing himself of his kingdom; but Philopator, engrossed in his pleasures, lent no ear to his entreaties.

In the meantime, Sosibius, the minister, who had great authority in the kingdom, assembled a council of his friends, and consulted with them as to the conduct which it would be most wise to adopt with regard to the request of Cleomenes. The idea of assisting him was at once relinquished; but it was also pronounced equally impossible to allow him to depart, since he would assuredly remember the neglect with which he had been treated, and sooner or later find means to revenge himself. It was therefore decided that the safety of the state forbade his being ever allowed his liberty in Alexandria.

A fictitious accusation, corroborated by a letter, forged by Sosibius, in the name of Cleomenes, easily prevailed

with the king to seize the King of Sparta, and imprison him; not, indeed, so strictly as to hinder him from having intercourse with his friends, but so as entirely to prevent his freedom of movement.

This treatment threw Cleomenes into the deepest melancholy, and perceiving no end to his calamities, he formed, in concert with his friends, a resolution which only despair could have suggested, and determined to revenge the injustice of Philopator by endeavouring to stir up the Alexandrians to rebellion. Death might, indeed, await him in the effort, but it would be the death of a brave man, and not that of a wretched and helpless captive. The friends who supported him in this idea found means to further his escape from prison, and afterwards collecting in a body, rushed into the streets with drawn swords, calling upon the populace to recover their liberty. But not one man joined them. The governors of the city and some of the nobles came out to oppose them, and were killed, and the insurgents then hastened to the citadel, purposing to set all the prisoners at liberty. The gates of the citadel were, however, shut and strongly barricaded. Cleomenes, lost to all hope, rushed wildly up and down the city, no person either following or opposing him, for all fled from him through fear. At length, seeing it absolutely impossible to carry out the scheme which had been so rashly formed, he and his friends terminated it tragically, by running upon each other's swords, to avoid the infamy of punishment.

Philopator ordered the body of Cleomenes to be hung on a cross, and commanded his mother, his children, and all the women who attended them, to be put to death. The only favour asked by the unhappy mother was, that she might die before her children, but the request was refused, and, after witnessing their last agonies, she presented her own neck to the executioner, saying: "Ah,

my children, to what a place did you come for protection!"

Whilst the attention of Philopator, was occupied with these internal disturbances, a powerful enemy had risen against him in Syria. That country, after having been humbled by Ptolemy Euergetes, had, in a great degree, recovered its independence and power under Antiochus, afterwards surnamed the Great, the son of Seleucus Callinicus. Damascus, which was held by the Egyptian troops, commanded by Philopator's general, Dinon, was regained by stratagem. The Syrian army, under Antiochus himself, encamped in the neighbourhood of the city, and the king, wishing to throw Dinon off his guard, invited several of the leading chiefs of the neighbourhood to a sumptuous entertainment. Information of this fact was conveyed to Dinon, who naturally imagined that there could be little danger for Damascus, when Antiochus was feasting with his friends. But while the guests were enjoying their entertainment, the Syrian troops were getting under arms, and the king, in the midst of the feast, left the supper table, and putting himself at their head, proceeded to storm the walls of the city. The Egyptian garrison being taken by surprise, were unable to defend themselves, and Damascus was carried by assault that night.

Another city of importance taken by Antiochus was Seleucia, situated near the mouth of the Orontes, and forming the harbour and port of Antioch, the capital, from which it was distant only twelve miles. Seleucia had been kept by the Egyptians for twenty-seven years, and the result had been most injurious to the capital, for the Egyptians, when in possession of the port, were able to destroy the commerce of Antioch by cutting off all communication between it and the sea. Antioch was, at that time, not only the chief city of Syria, but almost of the world. Its situation was beautiful, in a lovely

valley, which was enclosed by mountains several thousand feet in height, and watered by the Orontes, a river navigable up to the city. The high road between Europe and Asia passed through it, and these advantages rendered it so attractive to persons of every description, that it was continually needing enlargement. That such a city should be virtually in the hands of an enemy, must have been intolerable to the King of Syria, and when a council was held, and it was strongly urged by the physician of Antiochus, that an attempt should be made to recover Seleucia, few arguments would have been needed to convince the king and his nobles of the desirableness of such an undertaking. But no warlike efforts were necessary to put Antiochus in possession of Seleucia, or, indeed, of the adjoining province. The vices and follies of Philopator, and the treachery of the Egyptian governors, worked for the furtherance of the King of Syria's object, in a manner which he could little have anticipated. Seleucia was given up to him by the connivance of the garrison; and the disappointment and ill treatment of Theodotus, one of Philopator's generals, soon after made him master of the whole of Cœle-Syria.

Theodotus, then governor of that province, had, on a previous occasion, strenuously supported the cause of Philopator, and repulsed the forces of Antiochus, but, although he had done much, dissatisfaction was expressed at the court of Alexandria because he had not accomplished more, and he was summoned to Egypt to account for his conduct. His defence proved that the accusations brought against him were groundless, and he was sent back to his government; but he carried with him a bitter remembrance of the treatment he had received, whilst his natural indignation was heightened by the disgust with which the vices and effeminacy of Philopator and his court had inspired him during his short stay at Alexandria.

Even with regard to the needful preparations for war, the power of Egypt was degraded by the folly of the king. The courage of the soldiers was weakened by luxury, and the ships, built to increase the strength of the navy, were rather huge machines for the indulgence of ease and the display of costly furniture, than vessels in the least fitted to encounter the attacks of an enemy. Their chief pretensions to strength and usefulness consisted in their size. We read of one, 420 feet long and 57 wide, with forty banks of oars; fifty-seven feet being the length of the longest oars, which were weighted with lead at the handles, that they might be the more easily moved. This enormous ship was to be rowed by 4000 rowers; its sails were to be shifted by 400 sailors, and 3000 soldiers were to stand in ranks upon deck. In front there were seven beaks, by which it was to strike and sink the vessels of the enemy.

A royal barge, nearly as large as this huge ship of war, moved on the quiet waters of the Nile for the convenience and enjoyment of the king and his court. It was fitted with state and private rooms, and was nearly sixty feet high to the top of the royal awning.

But a still more magnificent vessel was presented to Philopator by Hiero, King of Syracuse. It was built under the care of Archimedes, and contained baths, rooms for pleasures of all kinds, a library and arrangements for an observatory. It was also a ship of war, with eight towers, and warlike machines capable of throwing stones of 300 pounds weight, and arrows eighteen feet in length. This ship was originally called the Ship of Syracuse, but after it had been given to Philopator it was known as the Ship of Alexandria.

The size and costliness of these ships, and of others built by Philopator, could in no way make amends for the absence of energy on the part of the king, and whatever

might have been the impression of magnificence left on the mind of Theodotus after his visit to the court, he felt it beneath him to depend any longer on the caprices of a prince so degraded. Accordingly, on his return to Syria, he seized upon the cities of Tyre and Ptolemais, which contained the magazines laid up by Ptolemy for the army, and delivered them up to Antiochus, together with forty ships of war.

Antiochus then advanced towards Egypt, intending to besiege Pelusium, but on his approach he found that the garrison had opened the flood-gates from the neighbouring lake, and by that means spoiled the fresh water of the neighbourhood. This would have caused such serious inconvenience to his troops, whilst carrying on operations against the city, that he was forced to give up his plan, and content himself with seizing many of the open towns on the coast of the Nile.

Philopator was at Memphis, living his usual life of self-indulgence, when the invasion of the Syrian king at length aroused him from his indolence. He had still a large and well disciplined army, consisting of Greeks, Cretans, Africans, Gauls and Thracians, besides the native Egyptians,—in all, seventy-three thousand men, and seventy-three elephants. With these forces he was preparing to meet his enemy at Pelusium, when intelligence reached him that Antiochus had for the time given up his designs upon Egypt and led back his forces to winter in Seleucia. A short time succeeded during which efforts were made to establish a regular peace, but the confusion which had followed the breaking up of Alexander's empire had so complicated the claims of the different kingdoms, that agreement was soon found to be impossible. Coele-Syria and Palestine were the great subjects of dispute, Philopator declaring that they had been assigned to his great-grandfather, Ptolemy Soter,

whilst Antiochus asserted, equally strongly, that they had been given to his ancestor, Seleucus Nicator. Neither party would yield, and, in consequence, when the time of the truce had expired, the war broke out anew.

The following spring, Antiochus, with a large army, again marched towards Egypt, and was met by Philopator at the village of Raphia, a hundred miles to the east of Pelusium. The two kings drew up their forces in battle array, and then went from one body of troops to another, speaking words of encouragement to the men. Philopator was accompanied by Arsinoë, his queen and sister, who rode with him on horseback through the ranks, calling upon the soldiers to fight for their wives and children, and even when the battle began would not consent to leave her husband. The Egyptians at first seemed in danger of defeat, for, as the armies approached each other, Philopator's Ethiopian elephants trembled at the smell of the Indian elephants of Antiochus, and shrank from engaging with animals so much larger than themselves. But before the end of the day a change took place in the fortunes of the battle, and though some of the Egyptian officers treacherously left their posts, and carried their troops over to Antiochus, their defection could not save the Syrian army from being completely routed. Arsinoë enjoyed the knowledge and the praise of having, by her intrepid example, been the chief cause of her husband's success; and the king, in gratitude, sacrificed to the gods the unusual offering of four elephants. The battle of Raphia was fought at the same time as the battle of Thrasymene, between the Carthaginians, under Hannibal, and the Romans, under Flaminius.

By this victory Philopator regained possession of Coele-Syria and Palestine, and the inhabitants submitted with

cheerfulness to his rule; for, having been long subject to the Egyptians, they entertained a more friendly feeling towards them than towards the Syrians. The Egyptian king remained a short time in the recovered province, during which period his court was crowded with ambassadors from various cities, and amongst the rest from Jerusalem, paying homage to him and offering him presents. But Philopator had neither the spirit nor the wisdom which would have enabled him to profit by his victories. He sighed for a return to his life of ease, and after enduring the ordeal of his newly acquired greatness for three months, he entered into a treaty with Antiochus, by which Coele-Syria, Palestine and Phœnicia were permanently ceded to Egypt, and peace was concluded.

Philopator then made his arrangements to return to Egypt, taking his journey through the conquered provinces, and seizing the opportunity to visit Jerusalem. According to the Greek principle of acknowledging and honouring the gods of all nations, he made considerable gifts to the Temple, and proposed to offer thanks and sacrifices in the sacred building, and to this no objection was made by the priests, who admitted him to the outer court of the Gentiles. But Philopator, struck with the beauty of the building, was not contented with this imperfect view, and insisted upon being allowed to enter the sanctuary, in which were kept "the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." (Heb. ix. 7.) The priests objected, stating that by their law no one, neither stranger nor Jew, except the High Priest himself, was permitted to pass beyond the second veil, and that only once in the year, on the great Day of Expiation. Philopator roughly answered that he was not bound by the

Jewish laws, and ordered them to lead him into the Holy of Holies.

The city was thrown into alarm by the report of this unheard-of presumption. The people collected together tumultuously, the air was rent with shrieks, and the priests and Levites drew together in a body, praying that the Almighty would guard His Temple from the profanation with which it was threatened. The determination of Philopator was only strengthened by this opposition, and any attempt to prevent him by force being useless whilst the outer court was filled with Greek soldiers, the king entered the second court. But he proceeded no farther. God interposed for the preservation of the reverence due to Himself, and before reaching the sanctuary the impious king fell to the ground in a fit, and was carried out speechless.

Philopator left Jerusalem, retaining in his heart a burning hatred of the Jewish nation, a feeling which exhibited itself in a cruel manner on his return to Egypt. A law was made by which the Jews were no longer to be considered as having the rank of Macedonians, but were to be enrolled amongst the Egyptians. Their bodies were to be marked with prick, in the form of an ivy-leaf, in honour of Bacchus, and those who refused to submit were to be outlawed, or forbidden to enter the courts of justice. The Jews were also ordered to sacrifice on the pagan altars, and many were sent to Alexandria to be punished for rebelling against this decree. But a merciful interposition of Providence saved them from the fate with which they were threatened. Whilst expecting to be trampled to death in the Hippodrome by furious elephants, a change came over the king's mind, and they were released unhurt. Three hundred Jews, who had yielded to the temptation and sacrificed to the heathen

deities, were afterwards put to death by their own countrymen.

The return of Philopator from Syria, and the peace concluded with Antiochus, were not followed by the repose which might have been anticipated. The native Egyptian forces, who formed a large and important part of Philopator's army during the late war, had learned, by the battle of Raphia, that an Egyptian phalanx might be not inferior to a Macedonian. They desired, therefore, to have an independent position in the army, and claimed as a right to be no longer placed under a Greek general, but to be allowed to serve under an Egyptian. This cause of discontent, added to their hatred of their vicious and cruel king, at length led them to break out into open rebellion. But the Greeks, although lowered in warlike courage by the wealth and luxury of Egypt, were still by far the better soldiers; the Egyptian rebels were unable to contend with them, and the insurrection was soon put down.

A period of some prosperity for Philopator, marked by friendly intercourse with foreign nations, ensued. It was about this time—in the twelfth year of his reign—that the Romans, being engaged in the long and doubtful war with the Carthaginians, known as the second Punic war, sent ambassadors to renew their treaty of peace with Egypt. Gifts of purple robes were sent both to Philopator and Arsinoë, and the king received besides a chair of ivory and gold, which was the usual present offered by the Roman republic to the monarchs who were its friends. An alliance with Rome did not, however, involve enmity with Carthage, and the Egyptian kings kept upon good terms with both states during all the Punic wars. With the exception of Syria, Philopator was indeed at peace with all his neighbours for the whole of his reign, and he was not remiss in evincing sympathy and

offering help when needed. The Island of Rhodes suffered greatly from the shock of an earthquake, which threw down a large part of the city walls and docks, together with the colossal statue built across the harbour after the siege by Demetrius Poliorcetes, and Philopator united with other kings and states in rendering assistance to the sufferers, and sent to Rhodes a large sum of silver and copper, with corn, timber, and hemp.

The birth of a son and heir, which took place during this period, might, it would have seemed, have strengthened Philopator's throne, and added to his happiness. It was an event considered of great importance, and ambassadors from the neighbouring states crowded to Alexandria with gifts and congratulations. With them came Hyrcanus the Jew, the son of Joseph, who was the favourite of Ptolemy Euergetes. He was sent from Jerusalem by his father, and brought to the king a present of one hundred boys and one hundred girls, each carrying a talent of silver. The presents were probably even more acceptable to Philopator than the birth of his child, for he was too far sunk in selfishness and vice to be deeply moved by any thing which did not affect his present and personal gratifications.

His time was spent in gaming, drinking and dissipation of every kind. Entirely forgetting his duties as a king, he valued himself upon presiding at concerts and playing on instruments. He kept in his pay several fools, or laughing-stocks, as they were then called, who were the chosen companions of his meals; but the person who chiefly influenced him was a woman named Agathoclea, who, with her brother, Agathocles, and her mother, Cleonthe, held him bound by those chains which clever and worthless favourites never fail to cast around a weak and vicious king. Agathocles was the king's adviser in matters of business as well as pleasure, and governed

alike the army and the courts of justice. Even Sosibius, the old and artful minister who had been the chief ruler in Egypt during the preceding reigns, could now only act according to the will of the favourite. Sosibius, however, was but too willing to yield to the vices and follies of the king and his satellites, and when an actual crime was at length suggested to him he did not hesitate to take part in it. He had indeed been already too much accustomed to such acts to feel any horror of them. The death of many persons, who were for various causes obnoxious to the king, had been attributed to him, and now, when told to kill Arsinoë, the wife of Philopator, who had acted with such heroism at the battle of Raphia, and contributed so greatly to her husband's victory, it does not appear that he interposed a single word in her favour. It was a case, however, in which petitions would have been little likely to prevail, for the offences of Arsinoë were not against the state, but against her husband's pleasure. She had no power at court, and no respect was paid her. The conduct of the favourites and of the prime minister was offensive to her, and she was not patient enough to bear her wrongs without murmuring. The king at length, weary of her complaints, resolved to rid himself of her, and, urged on by Agathoclea, gave orders for her death. Sosibius, to whom the task was entrusted, employed a man named Philammon to murder the unfortunate queen, but his own share in the action became known to the people, and the general indignation was so strongly and openly expressed that Philopator was compelled to yield to it, and Sosibius was called upon to give up the king's ring, which resembled what in modern days would be called the great seal of the kingdom, and was the badge of his office as prime minister. A council was held for the purpose of appointing his successor, and the choice fell unanimously upon Tlepolemus, a young nobleman who had

already signalised himself in the army by his valour. For the remainder of Philopator's reign Tlepolemus governed all the affairs of the kingdom. Some of those even which had hitherto been entrusted to Agathocles were placed in his hands, for the misconduct and vices of the favourite had raised an outcry against him, similar to that which had caused the downfall of Sosibius; and Philopator, though he would not relinquish the pleasure of his society, was compelled to take from him the charge of receiving the taxes, a post then bestowed upon Tlepolemus.

Another charge given to Tlepolemus was that of watching over the supply and price of corn in Alexandria. It was in those days considered wise policy to keep down the price of food in the capital, even though the effect of this arrangement might be injurious to the rest of the kingdom. Sometimes even a fixed measure of corn was given monthly to each citizen, but the result proved how much better it would have been not to interfere in these matters, but to lead the people to depend more entirely upon themselves; for, in consequence of this state support, the crowd of poor and restless citizens which swell the mob of every capital was larger in Alexandria than it otherwise would have been, and the danger of riot, which the rulers of the city hoped to lessen, was every year increased.

With all his vices, Philopator still retained the love of literature and science inherent in his family, and to his other luxuries he sometimes added that of the society of the learned men of the Museum; but want of moral feeling was but ill supplied by respect for talent. Philopator erected in the city of Alexandria a shrine or temple to Homer, and in this building he placed a sitting figure of the great poet, surrounded by seven worshippers, which were intended to represent the seven cities that claimed

the honour of being his birthplace; but the lofty desires and elevated thoughts which had contributed to produce works like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were wholly wanting in the court of Alexandria, and we may believe that even the genius of Homer would have been unable to overcome the debasing influences which would have encompassed him if he had lived in the city of literature under the rule of Ptolemy Philopator. In Upper Egypt, however, religious reverence for the king was not entirely extinguished. The Egyptian priests placed his name upon a small temple near Medinet Abou, and it is also to be found inscribed upon the temple at Karnac, and upon another temple in Ethiopia.

The people of Paphos, in the island of Cyprus, likewise set up a monument to him in the temple of Venus under the name of Eupator, by which he was sometimes known. The first three Ptolemies had been loved by their subjects and feared by their enemies, but Philopator began his reign like an eastern despot, with an act of cruelty dictated by jealousy, and continuing it on a system of tyranny and vice, completely alienated the hearts of his people. He died, worn out with disease, in the seventeenth year of his reign, and about the fifty-first of his age; B. C. 204.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PTOLEMY EPIPHANES—B. C. 204—180.

B. C. 204. THE only persons present when Philopator expired were Agathocles, his sister Agathoclea, and a few individuals entirely devoted to their interests; and the first thought which suggested itself to them was to conceal the king's death until the women could seize the money and jewels in the palace, and a plan could be formed to maintain the authority which they had enjoyed under Philopator. This, it was supposed, might be done by usurping the regency during the minority of his son Ptolemy Epiphanes, who was then but five years of age. For this purpose, when it was impossible longer to hide the fact that Philopator was dead, Agathocles caused the event to be publicly proclaimed, and, at the same time, summoned a council of Alexandrian Greeks, and Jews, to deliberate upon the steps which were to be taken for preserving order and good government.

At the time appointed he appeared at the assembly, followed by his sister Agathoclea, and accompanied by the young monarch. After shedding many tears, and wiping his eyes with the *chlamys*, or coloured scarf, which, like other Greeks, he wore over his shoulders, he took the little king in his arms and began a speech, in which he implored their protection for the youthful monarch, and informed them that "the late king, in his dying moments, had committed the child to the care of Agathoclea, commending him also to the fidelity of the Macedonians. In

accordance with this injunction, he now appeared before them to engage their assistance against Tlepolemus, who had so long held a chief authority in the state, but who, as he had certain reason to know, had formed the design of taking possession of the throne. If proof of this assertion were required, witnesses were ready to come forward."

The speech of Agathocles had a very different effect from that which he had anticipated. The citizens of Alexandria had long been oppressed by his tyranny, and utterly distrusted his word. Tlepolemus was, moreover, the person entrusted with the charge of supplying Alexandria with corn, a duty which was more likely to gain friends than ministering to the vices of a hated tyrant, and, although he had proved himself to be by no means a wise ruler, his faults were quite overlooked when put in contrast with the glaring offences of Agathocles. When the late favourite ended his speech, loud murmurs arose amongst the citizens, and the feeling of anger and disgust increasing as it was seen to be universal, the whole assembly rose in tumult and swore the destruction of Agathocles, his sister, and all their dependents.

Agathocles, upon the first symptoms of distrust, saw that his life was in danger, and he hurriedly left the assembly, and returned to the palace, where he spent some minutes in doubt as to whether he should seek safety in flight, or boldly turn upon his enemies, and, by ridding himself of them by murder, seize the power at which he had hitherto been craftily aiming.

The loss of these precious minutes was fatal to him. The tumult in the assembly spread to the streets, which were filled with groups of men, and of boys, who always formed part of an Alexandrian mob. Sullenly, but loudly, they gave vent to their hatred of Agathocles, and, at length, collecting with a definite purpose of ascertaining

the feeling of the army, they moved off to the tents of the Greek soldiers, and of the foreign mercenaries, which were close to the palace. A mob, composed of armed and unarmed men, soon proved that the soldiers were as exasperated as the citizens, but they were without a leader, and a messenger was sent to Tlepolemus, who happened to be absent from the city, to entreat his advice and assistance in the emergency. The answer brought back was, that Tlepolemus would return quickly, but, in all probability, he knew as little as his rival what, under the circumstances, it would be desirable to do.

Agathocles, in the meantime, utterly bewildered by the danger and difficulties which encompassed him, did nothing. He remained in the palace, his friends gathered around him, and, as the evening drew on, he sat down with them as usual to supper, trusting, probably, to chance, and to the strong walls of the palace for protection. His mother, Ceanthe, was, however, by no means so composed. She had been associated with her son in his offences, and she knew that she must also be a sharer in his punishment. In the days of her prosperity she had defied the laws which even heathens obeyed as the commands of the gods, but now, in her adversity, she sought the protection of the sanctuary, and, hastening to the temple of Ceres and Proserpine, sat down before the altar, weeping bitterly. It was a festal day, and the women engaged in the service of the temple, knowing nothing of the tumult which within those few hours had arisen in the Forum, came forward to comfort her. But Ceanthe turned from them with stern ingratitude. She knew that she was hated, and felt that soon she should be despised, and, answering their sympathy by a curse, she prayed the gods that they might live to eat their own children in the extremity of hunger.

The sun set, but the riot did not cease. Throughout

the night, men, women and boys hurried through the streets with torches. The crowds were greatest in the Stadium, where the public games were usually exhibited, and in the Theatre of Bacchus, but they were most noisy in front of the palace. Agathocles, who, after the evening spent with his friends, had retired to rest, was awakened by the uproar, and, beginning to distrust the security afforded by the palace walls, he rushed to the bedroom of the young king, and, carrying the child with him, hastened with the different members of the family, Aristomenes, one of the late monarch's ministers, and two or three guards, to an underground passage which led from the palace to the theatre. There the remainder of the night was passed. No acts of violence were attempted by the mob; but at daybreak the murmurs became louder, and thousands collected in the palace yard, calling for their young monarch. By this time the Greek soldiers had joined the mob, and as they were powerful enough to overcome any resistance from the royal guards, the people pressed upon the palace gates, burst them open, and began the search of the palace. Through the halls and lobbies the infuriated rabble rushed madly, but in vain. At length, hearing that Agathocles with the little king had fled to the underground passage, they hastened thither. The entrance was guarded by three doors of iron grating, but when the soldiers and the mob had succeeded in beating down the first, Aristomenes was sent out to offer terms of surrender. Agathocles was willing to give up the young king, to relinquish his misused power, his ill-gotten wealth and estates,—he asked only for his life.

A stern refusal was the reply, and a shout arose that Aristomenes should be killed. The minister's danger was imminent. He was the best of Philopator's advisers, and the only fault that could be brought forward against him was, that he was the friend of Agathocles, and had named

his little daughter Agathoclea ; but the angry mob were not in a condition to mete out justice. They required only a victim ; and the life of Aristomenes would certainly have been sacrificed, if some one present had not suggested that it was necessary to spare him in order that he might carry back their answer to Agathocles. Further resistance was now useless, and Agathocles, having no other alternative, delivered up the young king, and yielded himself a prisoner. The little monarch was set upon a horse, and led away to the Stadium, amid the shouts of the crowd. There he was placed on the throne from which his father had viewed the public games, and whilst he was crying in his childish terror at being surrounded by strange faces, the outcry of the mob for revenge on the guilty minister arose as loudly as before.

The clamour and confusion were overpowering, till Sosibius, the son of the former minister of that name, seeing no other way of putting a stop to the fury of the mob, and to the child's grief, turned to the little king, and asked him if the enemies of his mother and of his throne should be given up to the people. Without, of course, understanding what was meant the child answered "yes," and Sosibius was then permitted to carry him away to his own house, that he might be safe from the tumult.

The sentence so innocently passed was speedily put in execution. Agathocles was led forth bound, and stabbed in the presence of those who, but a few days previous, would have felt honoured by obtaining from him a word, or even a glance.

His family were reserved for a fate even yet more terrible. Enanthe was dragged from the altar of Ceres and Proserpine, and Agathoclea and her sister being brought forward, they were delivered up to the people, who, with the madness and cruelty which seem peculiarly

to have belonged to an Alexandrian mob, literally tore them in pieces.

The women of the lower orders, as is common in all such cases, were even more desperate and infuriated than the men. Not content with the death of Agathocles and his relations, they remembered that Philammon, who had been employed in the murder of Arsinoë, had, within three days, come to Alexandria, and they made a tumultuous rush at his house. The door quickly gave way before their blows, and the unhappy man was killed upon the spot by clubs and stones. His little son was strangled by these female monsters, and his wife dragged into the streets, and there torn to pieces.

A reign commenced under such horrible circumstances did not promise peace or prosperity for the future. Egypt was in fact left without a regular government, although Sosibius and Aristomenes undertook jointly the care of the young king, and in consequence of this charge were the actual rulers of the kingdom. The Alexandrian statesmen had latterly shown themselves very unworthy pupils of Ptolemy Soter and Philadelphus, whose object it always was so to form alliances from time to time with the neighbouring states as to allow the power of no one in particular to preponderate. But the ministers of Philopator, and those who carried on the government during the first years of the reign of his infant son, appear to have watched less carefully against such a source of danger. They were not aware that whilst the successors of Alexander were disputing about the division of his empire, the power of the Romans was growing rapidly, and they failed to foresee that, before many years had gone by, the republic would be their most dangerous enemy.

The close of the second Punic war, and the humiliation of Carthage, the great commercial state, might

perhaps have opened their eyes to this fact; but when this event took place (a.c. 201) Egypt was utterly weakened by the result of one of the most ungenerous wars which had ever been entered into by ambitious states.

Whilst the little King of Egypt was in the hands of his nurses, and the country exposed to all the dangers of insurrection and internal discord, Philip, King of Macedonia, and Antiochus the Great, King of Syria, agreed to seize upon the foreign provinces belonging to Egypt, and to divide them between themselves. Antiochus marched into Cœle-Syria and Phœnicia, and defeated the armies sent against him by the Egyptian rulers. He was assisted in his battles by the Jews, who retained a keen remembrance of the ill treatment they had endured under Philopator. Antiochus in return released Jerusalem from taxes for three years, sent a large sum of money for the service of the Temple, and granted to the elders, priests and scribes, and to the singing men, freedom from all taxation for the future. But there could have been little consolation for the Jews in this temporary protection. As Josephus, the Jewish historian, remarks, "they were reduced to this miserable case, that if the Syrian king got the better they were to be afflicted, and if he lost the day they were to suffer the same misfortune, so that they were not unlike a ship in a tempest, surrounded and dashed on every side with waves, for they were placed in the middle of Antiochus's good or bad fortune." For the time, however, the good fortune of the Syrian monarch prevailed. The Jews were safe, and the Egyptians were proportionately alarmed; and when ambassadors arrived from Rome, bringing the intelligence that the powerful republic had conquered Hannibal, and thanking the King of Egypt for the friendship that had been shown them during the doubtful struggle with Carthage, which had

lasted eighteen years, it is perhaps scarcely a cause for surprise that the Egyptian ministers, so closely threatened by Antiochus and his allies the Macedonians, should turn to the Romans with the confidence of finding in their support the strength which the country so urgently needed.

But the manner in which this aid was sought was an act of folly, perpetrated by men blindly rushing upon their own destruction. In answer to the embassy, the Alexandrian ministers sent to Rome a request that the Senate would undertake the guardianship of the young Ptolemy Epiphanes, and during his childhood defend the kingdom against Philip and Antiochus.

The reply of the Romans was most conciliatory. They accepted the responsibility offered them, and sent Marcus Lepidus to Alexandria to govern the foreign affairs of the kingdom, under the modest title of tutor to the young king. At the same time they despatched ambassadors to Antiochus and Philip, to order them to make no attack upon Egypt, on pain of falling under the displeasure of the Roman Senate.

The haughty command had at first but very little weight with the two monarchs. But when Antiochus had conquered Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria, he was met by a second message from the Senate, who no longer spoke in the name of their ward, the young King of Egypt, but ordered him to give up to the Roman people the states which he had seized, as they belonged to the Romans by the right of war.

Antiochus felt himself unable to cope with an enemy so imperious and powerful, and, in order to avoid direct submission, he entered into a treaty with Egypt, by which he betrothed his daughter Cleopatra to the young Ptolemy, and promised as her dower the disputed provinces of Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria, which were to be

given up to the Egyptians when the king was old enough to be married.

From this time the Greek kingdom in Egypt began to fall by the very same steps by which it had risen. When the old Egyptian kings upheld themselves in their government by the aid of Greek soldiers, they were paving the way for the subjection of their dominions to the power of the Greeks; and when the Alexandrian kings leaned upon the Romans for defence, they, in like manner, were preparing their country for subjection to Rome.

Even at the very commencement of this protective alliance with the Romans, the Egyptians were made to feel painfully the degradation of their position. Philip of Macedon marched against Athens, which had hitherto been in alliance with Egypt. The Athenians sent to Alexandria to beg for the usual help, but the Egyptian ministers dared not give it until they had sent to Rome to ask permission; and when the answer came back, they were told that the Senate did not wish them to give any such aid, but that the Roman people would themselves take care of the Greeks, who were their own allies. The great battle of Cyncephale, fought between the Romans and Philip of Macedon, and in which Philip was completely defeated, soon proved that Rome was indeed equal not only to protect her allies, but to conquer every opposing state, and even if Egypt had been in a condition to offer resistance to the encroachments of its protectors, the attempt would have been utterly useless. But in fact the internal condition of the country was fast bringing to maturity the seeds of decay, which had existed from the very beginning of the Alexandrian kingdom. The native Egyptians, the tillers of the soil and the owners of estates, had no share in the government. They lived under their Greek masters as a subject race; and whilst military discipline had been enforced, and life

and property respected, this obedience had been for the most part willingly granted; but during the childhood of the young Ptolemy anarchy and confusion increased every year. The government, weak in its relations with foreign states, was equally weak in its internal policy. The Egyptians, whilst conducting themselves with order and submission, had been entrusted with arms, and they turned these arms against their masters. Even in the last reign, the Egyptian phalanx, the strongest body of national troops, had shown signs of disobedience; and now, under the young king, who, by what would seem almost a mockery, was called by the Alexandrians, Epiphanes, or Illustrious, the soldiers broke out into open rebellion.

They took possession of a town in the middle of the Delta, and compelled the royal troops regularly to besiege it; but they were at length obliged to surrender, after receiving a promise from Ptolemy that their lives should be spared. The promise was not kept; and this faithlessness on the part of the king, which was exhibited also on many other occasions, was one great source of the discontent of his subjects during the whole of his reign.

The unsettled condition of the country became at length so serious and alarming that the governing council resolved, as the best means of re-establishing the royal power, to declare the king's minority at an end. Epiphanes had already reigned nine years, but he had not yet attained the legal age at which he might exercise an independent authority. The council however determined, as soon as possible, to celebrate what was called his *Anacleteria*, or the ceremony of exhibiting him to the people, and preparations were made for his coronation at Memphis.

To this city he came in state, and being met by the priests of Upper and Lower Egypt, he was crowned with

the double crown of the two provinces in the temple of Ptah. When the ceremony was concluded, the priests made a decree in honour of the king, which was carved on the stone known by the name of the Rosetta Stone, and which is now to be seen in the British Museum. The decree contains titles of honour bestowed on Epiphanes and his parents, who are all termed gods; and it enacts that the statue of Epiphanes shall be worshipped in every temple of Egypt, and be carried out in the processions with those of the gods of the country. It also contains a command that the enactments thus made shall be carved in sacred, common, and Greek writing at the foot of every statue of the king.

It was this stone, with its threefold inscription, which, after it had been forgotten for centuries, led to the interpretation of the hieroglyphical characters of Egypt.

The government of the minister Aristomenes, during the minority of Epiphanes, although so weak as to demoralise the people, was still remarkable for the lessening of taxation and the reverence shown to the priests and the temples. Aristomenes was a man of upright character, and in himself commanded respect. After the coronation of Epiphanes his influence was still so wisely exerted that, as long as the young king listened to his advice, the royal orders were on the whole obeyed. But the salutary check thus imposed upon the ignorance and selfishness of Epiphanes was soon thrown off. His vicious companions gained an ascendancy over his mind, and soon resolved to rid both themselves and the king of a tutor and counsellor who interfered with the indulgence of their wishes.

It happened on one occasion that Epiphanes, weary perhaps with the revelries of the preceding night, fell asleep when he ought to have been listening to the speech of a foreign ambassador. Aristomenes gently

shook him, and awoke him. When the king was alone with his companions and attendants, they represented to him that this act was a great impertinence. "If," they said, "it was right to blame him for falling asleep when worn out with the cares of state, yet at least it should have been done in private, and not in the presence of the whole court." This absurd complaint touched the pride of the young king, and forgetting all the benefits which he had derived from the council of his minister, he ordered that Aristomenes should be put to death by being compelled to drink poison.

From this period Epiphanes pursued his course of vice unchecked, and his people felt themselves under the power of a cruel tyrant. One means of redeeming his character was, however, granted him, through the influence of his wife Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus the Great, King of Syria, who, after being betrothed to him for six years, married him when he had attained the age of eighteen.

Cleopatra was a woman of strong mind and great good sense, and Antiochus, in consenting to the marriage, probably hoped that her influence over her weak husband might be turned to the advantage of Syria. But she proved herself true to her duties as a wife and a queen, and, instead of seeking to aggrandize her father, she was her husband's wisest and best counsellor throughout his reign.

Such assistance was greatly needed, for wars and disturbances followed each other rapidly during the remaining years of the young king's life. Antiochus, though he had professed to give up to Egypt, as a portion of his daughter's dowry, the provinces of Judea, Phœnicia, and Cœle-Syria, appears never really to have relinquished his hold of them; and as soon as Cleopatra was married, war broke out again. Internal dissensions followed. The Egyptians rebelled a second time, and a second time the

rebels were promised a pardon and afterwards betrayed; whilst Epiphanes, who had not even shown himself to the army during the time of danger, pretended, when the victory was gained, to act the conqueror, and actually caused the Egyptian leaders to be fastened to his chariot wheels, and, after dragging them round the city walls, ordered them to be put to death.

Cyprus and Cyrene were by this time nearly all that remained to Egypt of its foreign provinces. The Greek cities which had formerly sought the protection of the Alexandrian monarchs now looked to Rome for help. The greater part of Asia Minor was subject to Antiochus; Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria, which had been given up to Epiphanes, had been again lost; and the Jews, who had formerly sided with the kings of Egypt, as being the stronger but the milder rulers, now joined the Syrians. Epiphanes, however weak and vicious he might be, did not view this diminution of his power with indifference. When Antiochus the Great died, he determined to enforce his claims upon Cœle-Syria, and although warned by the Romans that it would be against their wish if the war were carried on, he still persisted in making preparations for it. It is stated that he was asked by one of his generals how he should be able to pay for the large forces which he was collecting. In reply, he said playfully, "My treasure is in the number of my friends." The joke was taken in earnest. His subjects were afraid of a heavy imposition of taxes, and as the surest mode of securing themselves from such a risk, formed a plan to poison him. The crime was effected without difficulty, and Ptolemy Epiphanes died in the twenty-ninth year of his age, after a reign of twenty-four years, leaving the navy unmanned, the army discontented and rebellious, the treasury empty, and the whole framework of government out of order.

Just before the death of Epiphanes he had offered some assistance to the Achæians, who were struggling against the Roman power. The Achæians in return thought it necessary to send ambassadors with messages of thanks. Polybius, the historian, from whom our chief knowledge of the reign of the Alexandrian kings is obtained, prepared to accompany them, but before the embassy had quitted Greece it was stopped by the news of the king's death.



CHAPTER XXV.

PTOLEMY PHILOMETOR AND PTOLEMY PHYSCON, JOINT
KINGS—B. C. 180—145.

B. C. 180. THE persons who formed the plot for the murder of Ptolemy Epiphanes appear to have had no thought of altering or improving the condition of Egypt, or of lessening the power of any future sovereign. Their act was merely an outbreak of private vengeance, and but little notice was taken of it by the people generally. Cleopatra, the strong-minded and sensible wife of Epiphanes, assumed the reins of government for her young son Ptolemy, surnamed Philometor, or the mother-loving, and for seven years was recognised as the Regent of Egypt. At the expiration of that period Philometor, having attained his fourteenth year, was crowned with great pomp, and ambassadors from several foreign nations were sent to offer congratulations, and to renew with him their ancient treaties of peace.

This state of prosperity and tranquillity continued during the lifetime of Cleopatra. Her brother Antiochus Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus the Great, was from his ambition the monarch most likely to be a source of danger to Egypt; but Cleopatra contrived to preserve peace with him. The weakness of the country was not exhibited until after her death, when the old disputes about Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria once more broke out. As in former reigns, the ministers and advisers of the King of Egypt laid claim to these provinces, whilst the King

of Syria denied that they had ever been given up. At length, as the most direct mode of settling the question, Antiochus marched into Egypt, defeated the Egyptian army at Pelusium, and took possession of the person of his nephew, Philometor. He then proceeded to Memphis, and pretending that he was acting on behalf of the nephew, who was in fact his prisoner, seized it without having to strike a blow.

From this moment a succession of confusing events, singularly unfortunate for Egypt, began. Philometor being a captive in the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes, his young brother, then about fifteen years of age, B. C. 170. declared himself king, taking at the same time the name of Euergetes the Second. This appellation was derived from one of the most popular of his ancestors, but Euergetes is better known in history as Ptolemy Physcon, or "the bloated," a nickname given to him when he had grown coarse and unwieldy from a life of luxury.

The Romans being the protectors of Egypt, ambassadors were sent to ask for their assistance against Antiochus; but as there would unavoidably be some delay before help could be obtained from them, even if they were willing to grant it, it was necessary to adopt more immediate and effective measures to save the kingdom from ruin. It happened that ambassadors from several foreign states were at that time in Alexandria. Two had arrived from Achaia, one to renew a treaty of peace, the other to settle the terms of a wrestling match. Three were present from Athens, one having brought gifts for the king, the others being connected with sacred affairs. An embassy from Miletus, and another from Clazomenae, likewise waited in the city; and the ministers of Ptolemy Physcon, seeing no other intercessor near, determined to make use of these foreign friends to alter, if possible, the purposes of Antiochus.

They proposed to them, therefore, to set out for Memphis, and, meeting the invader, to plead for peace. The mission was kindly undertaken. The ambassadors arrived at Memphis before Antiochus had left the city, and after being feasted in great state, an audience was granted to them.

But the task which had been undertaken was too difficult. Antiochus denied unscrupulously that his father had ever given the contested provinces as part of his daughter's dower, and, in order to gain time, he promised the petitioners that he would let them have an answer as soon as his own ambassadors, whom he had despatched to Alexandria, should return. In the meanwhile, he carried his army down the Nile, to Naucratis, and from thence marched to Alexandria, and laid siege to it.

The first assault was unsuccessful, and Antiochus, finding that he was not likely to obtain his object as speedily as he had anticipated, sent ambassadors to bribe both the Romans and the Greeks, in case he might need their help. The Egyptians, on their part, had the benefit of the intercession of their old allies, the Rhodians, who made great efforts to arrange a peace between them and the Syrian king. But Antiochus had a specious argument ready for the support of his own projects. He was, so he told the Rhodians, only fighting for the cause of his nephew, Philometor, and if the Alexandrians wished for peace, they had but to open their gates to their rightful monarch. His ingenious excuses did not, however, in this instance, profit him. Alexandria held out bravely, and Antiochus was at length compelled to retire, leaving Ptolemy Physcon, King of the Greeks, at Alexandria, whilst Philometor, at Memphis, was acknowledged to be the sovereign of the rest of Egypt. As a reward for his selfish ambition, Antiochus kept the city of Pelusium in his own hands, so that he might be able to re-enter Egypt

whenever he chose. He also carried off all the treasure on which he could lay his hands; and his court, and even his own dinner table, shone with a blaze of gold and silver, hitherto unknown in Syria.

Philometor had by this time clearly discovered the real motive of his uncle's actions; for the pretence of supporting the claims of the rightful monarch was evidently a mere mockery; all that Antiochus desired being to make Egypt a province of Syria. A union with his brother against their common enemy seemed to secure the best, and indeed the only, prospect of safety; and, although Physeon had, no doubt, acted wrongfully in proclaiming himself king, it appeared better to forgive him, and allow him to share the sovereignty of Egypt, than to expose the country to ruin by a civil war, which would, unquestionably, be followed by another Syrian invasion.

The two Ptolemies, therefore, agreed to reign together, and Philometor, at the same time, and as a part of the treaty, proposed, according to the Egyptian custom, to marry his sister, Cleopatra. The year in which this peace was concluded, was called the twelfth of Ptolemy Philometor, and the first of Ptolemy Physeon.

The following year saw the Syrians again in Egypt, and the gates of Memphis were a second time opened to Antiochus without a battle. But, on this occasion, the Romans interposed for the protection of the brother kings. Antiochus had marched to within four miles of Alexandria, when he was met by the Roman ambassadors, who ordered him to quit the country. Antiochus hesitated to comply with the emperor's command; but one of the ambassadors, drawing a circle round him on the sand with his stick, told him that if he crossed that line without promising to leave Egypt at once, it should be taken as a declaration of war against Rome.

Those were the days of Rome's greatest power, and Antiochus, mighty though he was, dared not risk the

anger of the republic. He quitted Egypt, and the two kings sent ambassadors to Rome to thank the Senate for their help, and to acknowledge that they owed more to the Roman people than they did to the gods or to their forefathers.

Relieved from a foreign enemy, the brothers had leisure to cherish their mutual distrust. Quarrels broke out, and the party of Physcon, being the stronger of the two, Philometor was driven from the kingdom, and forced to take refuge at Rome. He was not the only prince who was at that time suing for restoration to a throne, at the hands of men who disdained all regal authority. Demetrius, a nephew of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, as a son of that king's eldest brother, had a prior claim to the Syrian throne, was also in Rome, asking to plead his rights before the Roman Senate; and feeling great sympathy for the misfortunes of Philometor, he prepared, as soon as he heard of the approach of the Egyptian monarch, to show him all the respect in his power. He accordingly caused royal robes and an equipage to be made ready, in order that Philometor might enter Rome in kingly state, and went himself to greet him. The two princes met at the distance of about twenty-six miles from Rome. Philometor received the attentions of Demetrius with great gratitude, but he did not deem it right to accept his presents, or to permit the Syrian prince to attend him during the rest of his journey. He persisted in entering Rome on foot, with the dress which he then wore, and accompanied by the same attendants. His object was to excite the compassion of the Romans, by exhibiting before them the poverty to which he was reduced; and, with this same purpose in view, he took up his abode in a lodging belonging to one of his own subjects, a painter of Alexandria.

When the Senate received notice of the arrival of Philometor, they sent a message of excuse for the neglect

of the honours usually shown to princes of his rank, which did not, they said, arise from any disrespect, but only from the fact that his coming had been so carefully kept secret. They gave directions that he should be conducted to a house suitable to his birth, and be provided, at the public expense, with all things necessary for his due maintenance whilst he remained in Rome; and soon afterwards an audience was granted him, in order that he might represent his case to the Senate.

A decision was given in his favour—at least, to a certain extent. Physcon, it was settled, should reign in Cyrene, whilst the rest of Egypt should remain under the dominion of Philometor.

To this decree Physcon could offer no resistance; but he complained that the division was very unfair, and the year after it had been made he went himself to Rome to entreat that the island of Cyprus might also be granted him. This request was complied with, and orders were given that if any resistance were made by Philometor, the Roman forces should support Physcon. It is said that whilst Physcon was at Rome on this occasion, he made an offer of marriage to Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, but was refused.

The decree respecting Cyprus was productive of most serious consequences. The governor of the island, faithful to Philometor, would not give it up, and the Roman ambassadors sailed to Alexandria, and appealed to Philometor, seeking to compel him to enforce their orders. Philometor received them with all honours, and gave them fair promises, but still delayed any direct reply. He contrived indeed, by his courteous treatment, to keep them forty days in this state of uncertainty, and at the end of that time they returned to Rome to communicate the failure of their object to the Senate, who forthwith declared the peace with Egypt to be at an end.

Physcon, whilst seeking to gain an increase of his kingdom, ran a serious risk of losing what he already possessed. The people of Cyrene hated him for his cruelty and despised him for his vices. They called him Kakergetes, or the Mischief-maker, as well as Physcon, and at length rose in rebellion against him. It was for some time doubtful which side would be victorious, but the insurrection was at length put down, and Physcon, having received some small support from the Romans, obtained leave from the Senate to levy an army of his own, enlisted some of the allies of the republic under his standard, and then made a vigorous effort to gain possession of Cyprus. The fact that an Egyptian prince could not venture to raise an army without the permission of Rome is a sufficient proof of the state of degradation to which the once powerful kingdom had sunk.

The actual support given to Physcon on this occasion seems to have been nothing, and being unable by himself to cope with the power of Philometor, he was compelled, after the loss of several battles, to lay down his arms, and yield himself his brother's prisoner.

The superior character of Philometor was displayed in a remarkable manner on this occasion. Physcon had before rebelled and been forgiven, and it would scarcely have been a matter of surprise if his punishment had now been severe. But Philometor not only forgave him a second time, but replaced him on the throne of Cyræe.

The Romans allowed this peace to be effected without their interference. Their troops were probably needed in other quarters, as the third Punic war was just beginning, and it is not impossible that the magnanimity of Philometor may have turned the feeling of the Senate in his favour.

In the meantime Demetrius, of Syria, who when at

Rome had shown so much sympathy for Philometor, had succeeded in establishing himself upon the Syrian throne, without the aid of the Romans, and had induced them at length to acknowledge him as king. But he was a prince devoted to luxury and self-indulgence, and when he had lost the stimulus which supported him whilst he was unfortunate, he gave himself up to pleasure. Having caused a castle flanked with four towers to be built near Antioch, he shut himself up in it, and refusing to attend to any business, spent half the day in drinking. The memorials presented to him were never attended to, justice ceased to be administered, and the condition of the country became at last so deplorable that his subjects entered into a conspiracy to dethrone him, and their plans were in an underhand manner supported by Philometor.

The motive for this apparently ungrateful conduct is to be found in the treachery of Demetrius, who had formed a plot with the governor of Cyprus, by which that island was to be delivered up to him for the sum of five hundred talents. This baseness cancelled former benefits, and Philometor now joined with the enemies of Demetrius in an attempt to set up a new pretender to the throne of Syria. The person chosen for this purpose was a young man named Balas, of low birth, but well able to enact the part assigned him. Following the directions given him, Balas declared himself to be the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, and having been well instructed in all that he was to say and do, he succeeded in misleading many persons in Syria, and was at length taken to Rome, where the Senate, though they saw plainly through the imposture, issued a decree in his favour, and even promised him their assistance. Balas now took the name of Alexander, and assumed the title of King of Syria; and having seized upon the city of Ptolemais, in Pales-

tine, was joined there by many of the discontented subjects of Demetrius.

The danger was now so pressing that Demetrius was obliged to quit his castle and his pleasures, and take steps for the defence of his crown, but it was all in vain. A great battle was fought, in which his troops were totally defeated, and the king, after making every effort to retrieve the day, was compelled to flee. In the retreat his horse plunged into a bog, and his pursuers coming up with him killed him with their arrows.

Alexander Balas, by this victory, found himself King of Syria, and immediately sent to demand in marriage Cleopatra, the daughter of Philometor. The proposal was accepted, and Philometor himself conducted his daughter to Ptolemais, where the marriage was celebrated with great pomp. But the deceit in which Alexander had been so well instructed was now turned against those who had supported him. At the very time when Philometor was at Ptolemais, and about to form a most intimate alliance with the new King of Syria, a plot was formed against his life. It was discovered, and Philometor demanded of Alexander that the leaders should be given up to him. Alexander not only refused, but openly admitted that the conspiracy was in part his own; and as the natural consequence of such an acknowledgment, Philometor recalled his daughter, and turned against Alexander the troops which had been led into Syria for the purpose of supporting him. He entered Antioch at the head of his army. But although he was actually proclaimed King of Asia and Egypt by the citizens, he had no intention of taking possession of the kingdom. All that he proposed was to support the claim of a rival prince, Demetrius Nicator, the son of Demetrius, and to give him in marriage the daughter whom he had taken from Alexander. With a forbearance which was then

very uncommon, he called together a council of the people, and persuaded them to receive this new monarch; and when Nicitor had been acknowledged as king at Antioch, Philometor prepared to support his cause by marching against Alexander.

When the two armies met in battle Alexander was defeated, and fled; but the victory was dearly purchased. Philometor's horse, frightened in the battle by the braying of an elephant, threw him into the ranks of the enemy, and he was taken up covered with wounds. For five days he lay speechless. The surgeons then endeavoured to cut a piece of the broken bone from his skull, but he died under the operation. If the certainty of victory could have afforded him any satisfaction in his dying hour it was granted him; for the head of his enemy, Alexander, was brought to him before he expired. He is said to have looked at it with delight, but the assertion seems incompatible with his otherwise humane disposition.

Ptolemy Philometor reigned thirty-five years in all; eleven years alone, six years jointly with his brother, and eighteen more alone whilst Physcon reigned in Cyrene. His character was alike brave and mild, and he is the last monarch of his family who can be regarded with any satisfaction. He left his kingdom stronger than he found it, and governed with such gentleness that not only were his friends and kinsmen spared when they had rebelled against him, but no citizen of Alexandria was put to death during the whole of his reign.

Learning and science flourished at Alexandria during the reign of Philometor notwithstanding the disturbances of the country. Hipparchus, the astronomer, was the greatest literary man of the period. He was remarkable for his industry and his unwearied search after truth. It was he who first made a catalogue of the fixed stars. The Alexandrian grammarians of that day were also noted.

Aristarchus, the tutor of Phryseon, who was one of them, was particularly distinguished for his critical writings. He devoted himself chiefly to the examination of Homer, and with the aid of his friends produced the corrected edition of the writings of the great poet, which has been handed down to the present day.

The wars between Syria and Egypt during the reign of Philometor were, as they had ever been, the source of much confusion in Judea—the Jews being divided into two parties, the Syrian and the Egyptian. The Syrian party at length obtained the upper hand, and Onias, the High Priest, with a large body of Jews, fled to Egypt, where they were well received by Philometor. Taking advantage of the king's favour, Onias entreated permission to build a temple in Egypt, and carry out the Jewish services as at Jerusalem. He was very earnest in this project, from his belief that it had been foretold by Isaiah about six hundred years before; when the prophet says, "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt." (Ch. xix. 19.) Philometor granted the request, and the temple was built at On, or Onion, a city about twenty-three miles from Memphis. It was on the site of an old Egyptian temple dedicated to the goddess Pasht or Diana—most likely the same in which, upwards of twelve centuries before, the wife of Joseph had worshipped with her father, Potipharah. The building of this temple, and the celebration of the Jewish feasts there, were never failing causes of quarrel between the Hebrew and the Greek Jews. About the same time, the Jews brought before Philometor their dispute with the Samaritans, as to the comparative claims of the Temple at Jerusalem, and that on Mount Gerizim. Philometor was content with the proof that the Temple had stood at Jerusalem for above eight hundred years, and he put to death the two Samaritan pleaders who, probably in their zeal for Mount

Gerizim, had been guilty of some outrage against the Jews.

Onias, the High Priest, bore offices of trust in the government of Philometor; as did also Desitheus, another Jew, who brought with him into Egypt a second part of the Book of Esther, which he said had been translated from the Hebrew. The original, however, was never published, and the assertion was therefore doubted, and on this account the Second Book of Esther is placed in the Apocrypha.

Philometor's reverence for the gods was shown by the temples which he built, but the old hieroglyphical characters were no longer used in the inscriptions. Respect for the religious prejudices of the natives was gradually dying away, and the dedications on the porticoes were carved in Greek. A temple at Apollinopolis Magna, one of the largest and least ruined of the sacred buildings of the Egyptians, dates from the reign of Philometor, though it was not finished till one or two reigns later. It was also used as a castle, and it must have been very strong, not only from its formation but its position. It stood on a height commanding the city of Apollinopolis, and the fact that it was left in the hands of the Egyptians, proves that they were not distrusted by their Greek rulers. The priests were maintained partly by their own estates, and partly by voluntary offerings, and we still possess a deed of sale made in the reign of Philometor, by the Theban priests, of the sixth part of their collections for the dead, who had been buried in the Libyan suburb at Thebes. The bargain was made in the presence of sixteen witnesses whose names are given, and the deed was registered and signed by one of the public officers of the city of Thebes. The custom of making offerings for the benefit of the dead must have been common in the time of Moses, as the Jew, on presenting the basket of first fruits, is called

upon to say that he has not given ought for the dead. (Deut. xxi. 14.) The sixth part of the collections mentioned in the deed of sale consisted of seven or eight families of slaves, whose price was four hundred pieces of brass, perhaps about one hundred and fifty shillings. The names of the slaves are Coptic, so that they were probably of the same religion, and spoke the same language, as their masters, but the low price demanded for them proves that they must have been rather serfs than slaves, and that the master was not permitted to overwork them. In each case, also, the father was joined in the same lot with his children. The prisoners taken in battle, and who might be treated with greater severity, were much more valuable.



CHAPTER XXVI.

PTOLEMY PHYSCON SOLE KING—B. C. 145—116.

THE repetition of the same names in the Egyptian royal family of this period is a source of endless confusion. Ptolemy Philometor married his sister Cleopatra, and left her a widow with two daughters, each named Cleopatra, and a young son named Ptolemy. The elder daughter was married first to Alexander Balas, and then to Demetrius Nicator. The younger, afterwards known as Cleopatra Cæceæ, was left with her brother under the care of their mother.

It was natural to expect that a contest for the throne would follow the death of Philometor, and some efforts were made by the widowed queen to assert her son's rights against those of his uncle Physcon; but the lower orders of the people favoured the latter, and when Cleopatra and some of the chief men in Alexandria proclaimed the little prince king, Physcon, certain of finding support in the mob, marched at once from Cyrene to Alexandria to seize the crown for himself. Onias, the Jew, defended the city for Cleopatra, but, before any decided conflict could begin, peace was made between the contending parties by the influence of the Roman ambassador, who was supposed to have been bribed by Physcon, and, according to the usual practice in Egypt, with regard to family pretensions to the crown, the contradictory claims were set at rest by the decision, that Physcon should be acknowledged king, but that he should marry his sister-in-law, Cleopatra, his brother's widow. It

can scarcely be doubted that one article of the agreement entered into at this time was that Philometor's son should, on the death of his uncle, succeed to his throne; but Physcon, forgetting that he owed his own life to his brother's forbearance, caused the boy to be put to death on the day of his marriage with Cleopatra.

The Alexandrians must by this time have been too well accustomed to the cruelty and vices of the royal family to be surprised at this, or any other tragical event; but they were not prepared for the barbarity now to be exercised upon themselves. Physcon had entered Alexandria peaceably, but he no sooner found himself secure on the throne than he determined to revenge himself upon those who had taken part with Cleopatra against him. The city was given up to his mercenary troops, and fearful bloodshed was the result. The Jews were looked upon as especially his enemies, and were threatened with utter destruction; and, although the threat was not carried out, their alarm was so great that they celebrated an annual festival in Alexandria for several hundred years afterwards, in thankfulness for having escaped from it; whilst the Alexandrians, filled with terror at the character of their new monarch, left the city in such numbers that the once crowded metropolis became almost a desert. Physcon, at length fearful that he should soon be left to reign over a wilderness, caused a proclamation to be made in the neighbouring countries, promising privileges and advantages to all who would permanently settle there, and by this means Alexandria was re-peopled, and, through the ordering of Providence, the cruelty of Physcon worked for the benefit of other nations. The men of learning and science who had hitherto congregated almost exclusively in Alexandria, dispersed themselves in consequence of their terror in different places, and being reduced to poverty were compelled to seek occupation as teachers, at

a low price. Knowledge was thus generally diffused, and the civilization of the world greatly advanced.

Physcon dated his reign from his first rebellion against his brother, and the seizing of Alexandria. The first year of his real reign was therefore called the twenty-fifth. He was crowned in the following year at Memphis, where a son by Cleopatra was born to him, whom, in order to please the people, he named Memphites. But Cleopatra was already in disgrace, and he soon afterwards divorced her, and married her daughter and his niece, Cleopatra Ceceæ. For these and other infamous acts he lived hated by every one.

The Romans did not look on indifferently whilst vice and injustice were reigning in the country which they had taken under their protection. The ambassador who had assisted in establishing the power of Physcon was called to account for his conduct; and Cato, the censor, in one of his great speeches, accused him of having been led away from his duty by the love of Egyptian gold, and loudly demanded his punishment. In the meanwhile, Scipio Africanus the younger, the conqueror of Carthage, was sent with two other ambassadors to Egypt, in order to see that the affairs of the kingdom were peaceably settled. Physcon went to meet him with great pomp, and received him with all the honours due to his name and rank; and the people thronged to catch a glimpse of the celebrated general. But Scipio, himself, cared little for this outward show. Although the first man in Rome, he came accompanied only by five servants and one friend, Pænetius, the philosopher, the chief of the Stoics, who had gained a great name for a work which he had written on the Duty of Man; and during the whole time he was in Alexandria, although the king caused him to be served with whatever was most delicate and gratifying to

the taste, he lived in the most simple manner, and never touched anything but the most ordinary kind of food.

Physcon exhibited to the great Roman his palace and his treasures, but these were not the objects of Scipio's interest. The trade of Alexandria, its harbour, shipping and lighthouse, were his admiration. He went by boat to Memphis, and saw the fertile country, the rich crops, the numerous villagee, and the well-fed and well-clothed people, and was convinced that Egypt needed only a good government to be again what it once was, the first kingdom in the world. But the days of Egyptian greatness were past.

Physcon had indeed one friend, by whose aid he might have restored prosperity to his people, Hierax, a Syrian by birth, and who had once served under Alexander Balas, and was now general and prime minister in Egypt. By wise and equitable government, and by the help of his popular manners, habits of business, and knowledge of war, Hierax contrived for seven years to maintain tranquillity in Egypt, notwithstanding the hatred of the people for their monarch. When the treasures of the state were used for the king's pleasures, and the soldiers were murmuring because they were unpaid, Hierax employed his own money to quiet the rebellious feeling; but this system could not be continued; and soldiers without pay, instead of being the protectors of a throne, are its greatest enemies. The grievances of the people at length became intolerable, and their indignation was brought to a climax when Physcon, jealous of the new inhabitants of Alexandria, caused a body of young men to be one day surrounded by his foreign troops, in the place of exercise, and all put to the sword. The whole population then ran in fury to the palace, and set it on fire, hoping to burn the king with it. But Physcon had

fled before they reached it, and with his wife Cleopatra Cocce, and his son Memphites, was on his way to Cyprus. Upon his arrival he learnt that the Alexandrians had placed the government in the hands of his first wife and sister, Cleopatra, whom he had divorced, and he immediately raised troops to make war upon her and her adherents.

War alone was, however, far too ordinary a weapon of offence for the tyranny of Physeon. He had in his power a surer means of wreaking vengeance upon Cleopatra. His son, Memphites, a youth of great promise, was with him at Cyprus, and fearing lest the boy's name should be used in order to strengthen his mother's claim to the throne, the king ordered him to be killed. The body was then cut in pieces, and the head, hands, and feet were put into a chest, and conveyed by one of the royal guards to Alexandria. The birthday of Cleopatra was drawing nigh, and was to be celebrated with great magnificence. In the midst of the rejoicings, the messenger of Physeon approached, as if to offer some splendid gift. He presented the box, and, on opening it, Cleopatra beheld the mutilated remains of her only son. The grief of the queen was only equalled by the horror of the people. They rushed to arms—thinking only how they might best protect themselves from ever again falling under the power of such a monster, and were soon formed into a regular army under Marsyas, the general to whom Cleopatra had entrusted the task of defending the country.

A battle was fought, and the forces of Cleopatra were defeated. Marsyas was taken prisoner, and sent, laden with chains, to Physeon. For once the tyrant was merciful. When all were in expectation that the defeated general would be put to death in torments, Physeon pardoned and set him at liberty. But Cleopatra, though she had failed in her first effort, was by no means inclined to relinquish to her cruel foe the power which she had so

recently obtained. She sent to Syria, demanding assistance from her son-in-law, Demetrius Nicator, and aid was, for a time, granted. Demetrius advanced into Egypt, and laid siege to Pelusium, but he was as much hated in his own country as Physcon was in Egypt. The Syrians took advantage of his absence, and rose in arms, and he was obliged to return in order to quell the insurrection. The Egyptians were not sorry to see him depart. Much as they dreaded the tyranny of Physcon, they dreaded yet more the idea of being made a province of Syria; and the fact that Cleopatra had sought for foreign aid, rendered her so unpopular, that she was soon compelled to flee from Alexandria, carrying her treasures with her; she took refuge with her daughter, the Queen of Syria, at Ptolemais, and Physcon regained his throne.

As might have been anticipated, his one object now was to revenge himself for the interference of Demetrius. With this view, he set up an impostor, named Zabbinus, the son of a merchant in Alexandria, but who, he pretended, was the son of Alexander Balas, and sent him with an army into Syria. The Syrians, hating their monarch, were willing to acknowledge any person who would be likely to free them from his tyranny, and Zabbinus found no difficulty in conquering Demetrius. The Syrian king fled to Ptolemais, and being there rejected by his own wife, who caused the gates of the city to be shut against him, finally sought refuge at Tyre, where he was killed, whilst the queen and Zabbinus divided the kingdom between them.

Physcon had so greatly contributed to the success of Zabbinus, that he naturally expected to find him subservient to his will, but in this he was greatly mistaken. His orders were resisted, and the King of Egypt, in great indignation, made peace with his sister Cleopatra, who was again allowed to return to her own country, and

bent all his efforts towards placing on the throne of Syria Antiochus Grypus, a son of Demetrius Nicator, to whom he gave one of his daughters in marriage.

This undertaking, which proved successful, was the last event of importance in the reign of Ptolemy Physcon. He died in the fifty-fourth year of his reign, B. C. 117. That he should have lived so long is a matter of astonishment, when we learn that he was such an enormous size as to measure six feet round. He left a widow,—Cleopatra Cocco; two sons,—Ptolemy and Ptolemy Alexander; and three daughters,—Cleopatra, who was married to her elder brother, Tryphœna, married to Antiochus Grypus, and Selene, who was unmarried. No reign was more tyrannical, nor abounded with greater crimes than that of Ptolemy Physcon. Up to this period the power of Egypt had been so great, that the titles bestowed upon its monarchs were copied in nearly every Greek kingdom; but that of *Euergetes*, the benefactor, which had, at the beginning of his reign, been adopted by Physcon, as the appellation of the most popular of his forefathers, was now recognised as only another name for tyrant. As in the case of his predecessor, Philopator, the vices of Ptolemy Physcon were not incompatible with a taste for literature. He would sometimes allow his companions to argue with him till midnight, on a point of history or a verse of poetry, but not one of them dared to utter a word against his tyranny, or to raise a voice of entreaty in favour of a less cruel treatment of his enemies. The schools of Alexandria, though no longer holding the high place in public estimation which they had gained under Philadelphus, were still highly thought of. The king continued to give salaries to the professors, and one of them received twelve talents, or two thousand pounds, a year; but, as it has previously been stated, many of the most learned men left the city in consequence of Physcon's cruelty. The

city of Pergamus, in Asia Minor, was at this period almost taking the place once held by Alexandria. Eumenes, King of Pergamus, a great encourager of literature, had collected two hundred thousand volumes, and this fact excited the jealousy of Physcon, who, not content with increasing his own library, desired to diminish that of others. With this object, he made a law, forbidding the exportation of the Egyptian papyrus, on which books were written. The copiers employed by Eumenes then had recourse to sheep skins, which were called *charta pergamena*, or parchment, from the name of the city in which they were written; and thus our two words, parchment from Pergamus, and paper from papyrus, remain as monuments of the rivalry in book-collecting between the two monarchs.

In the list of Alexandrian authors of this period, mention must be made of the son of Sirach, the Jew, who came to Egypt, in the reign of Ptolemy Physcon, and translated into Greek the Book of Ecclesiasticus, which had been begun in Hebrew by his grandfather, using, as he says himself, "great watchfulness and skill, to bring the book to an end, and set it forth for them also which in a strange country are willing to learn, being prepared before in manners to live after the law."

Some insight into the possibility of communicating with India by sea, was gained in the reign of Ptolemy Physcon. The trade of the Egyptians had hitherto given them very little knowledge of geography. The commercial wealth of the country had chiefly arisen from the carriage of the merchandize of India and Arabia from the ports on the Red Sea to those on the Mediterranean; but the Egyptians appear to have had no knowledge of the countries from which the goods which they purchased were obtained; and it was thought that the difficulty of carrying water in small ships, with large crews of rowers,

would alone have been sufficient to prevent a voyage of any length along a desert coast, from which the necessary supply could not be obtained. It was, therefore, very startling to the court of Alexandria when intelligence was received that the Arabian guards, on the coast of the Red Sea, had found a man in a boat by himself, who could not speak Coptic, and who was afterwards discovered to be a native of India. He had sailed straight from that country, and lost his shipmates on the voyage, and he was now willing to show any person the route by which he had arrived. Eudoxus, of Cyzicus, a noted geographer, made a petition to Physcon to give him the command of a vessel for this voyage of discovery. The king consented, and Eudoxus sailed for India, and brought back a cargo of spices and precious stones. He repeated his voyage again after the death of Physcon, but little use was really made of it. The art of navigation was very imperfectly understood, and the goods of India, which were all costly and of small weight, were still, for the most part, carried across the Desert on the backs of camels. Indeed, scarcely more than twenty small vessels ever went to India in one year during the reigns of the Ptolemies, and it was not till Egypt was a province of Rome, that the trade winds across the Arabian Sea were found out by Hippalus, a pilot engaged in the Indian commerce.

The gold mines of Berenice were worked actively during the cruel reign of Ptolemy Physcon. Prisoners, criminals and slaves, men, women and children alike—were condemned to labour in them; and imprisoned in these caverns, tunnelled under the sea or into the side of the mountain, they worked by torchlight, under the lash of the taskmaster, without the power of making their sufferings known. Seldom, indeed, has the love of gold been the cause of greater cruelty than in the Egyptian mines.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PTOLEMY LATHYRUS AND PTOLEMY ALEXANDER I.—
B. C. 116—87.

B. C. 116. PTOLEMY PHYSCON left the kingdom of Egypt to his widow Cleopatra Cocce and one of her sons, allowing her the choice of which should be her colleague. But the will of the people was expressed so strongly that no preference was in fact possible; and although the queen's own inclinations would have led her to decide in favour of Ptolemy Alexander, her younger son, she was obliged to accept the elder. Before, however, she would consent to this arrangement she compelled him to enter into an agreement to put aside his sister Cleopatra, whom he had married, and to whom he was much attached, and to marry his younger sister Selene instead. His mother's hope was that Selene would be false to her husband's cause, and weaken his party in the state by her treachery. The heart sickens at these continual instances of the degradation and depravity of the Egyptian Court, and indeed the lives of the later Ptolemies may for the most part be condensed into a short space. Their actions worthy of notice were few, and their vices many. Ptolemy Soter the Second, or Ptolemy Lathyrus, as he is generally called, from a stain in the form of a leaf pricked upon his face, in honour of Osiris, though professing to be a joint sovereign with his mother, lived quite apart from her. Each, in fact, was supported by a distinct party, but the stronger

mind of Cleopatra Cocce gained her the larger share of power.

The sister and wife whom Lathyrus had repudiated was his first enemy when he came to the throne. She made a treaty of marriage with Antiochus Cyzicenus, who was the half-brother of Antiochus Grypus, King of Syria, and, as it has before been stated, had married her sister Tryphæna. Cyzicenus was striving for the crown with his brother, and the unnatural warfare was carried on fiercely. Cyzicenus and Cleopatra were defeated, and fled to Antioch. The city was besieged by Grypus and Tryphæna, and when it was taken by them Cleopatra took refuge in a temple. Tryphæna ordered her to be dragged from it and put to death; and although Grypus urged that he had no wish to stain his victory with the death of one who was the aunt of his children, and by marriage his sister, yet Tryphæna was merciless. She gave her own orders to the soldiers, and Cleopatra was killed as she clung to the statue of the goddess. The punishment of this horrible action soon followed. In the next battle Cyzicenus was the conqueror, and Tryphæna was put to death.

The Egyptian Jews were at this time very powerful in Alexandria, for their country was rising into importance under Judas Maccabeus, who had made a successful struggle against the tyranny of the Syrian monarchs. Cleopatra Cocce had given the command of her army to two Jews, and when a civil war broke out in Judea, between the Jews and the Samaritans, she took the part of the former. Probably for that very reason Lathyrus assisted the Samaritans, but it was an impolitic act, since by it he lost the goodwill of the Jews in Lower Egypt, and gave his mother an opportunity of exciting an insurrection against him in Alexandria, the result of which was that he was compelled to flee from Egypt. Cleopatra took his

wife Selene from him, and allowed him to withdraw to Cyprus, which had for some time been formed into a separate kingdom, governed by Ptolemy Alexander, the younger brother of Lathyrus. This prince was now summoned to Alexandria and made joint ruler with his mother, but there was no change in the government beyond that of the names which were placed at the head of the public acts.

The enmity between Cleopatra and Lathyrus exhibited itself for some time in the opposite help which they afforded to the parties who were carrying on a conflict in Judea. The Maccabees had assumed the dignity of kings, but their authority was resisted by several important cities. Lathyrus sided with the royal party, his mother with that of the people, and at one period Cleopatra was so successful that she was advised to seize the throne of Judea for herself. The dread of irritating the Egyptian Jews kept her, however, from this step; and having entered into a league with Judea, she turned her forces against Cyprus, and attacked her son there. Lathyrus was conquered and fled from the island, but Cleopatra was so indignant with the general who had allowed him to escape with his life that she ordered him to be put to death. The punishment of the unnatural mother was now drawing nigh. Ptolemy Alexander, weary of the subjection in which he was kept, and seeing no means of gaining the power in the state to which he considered himself entitled, left Egypt by stealth, choosing rather to be an exile from his throne than to live surrounded by Cleopatra's minions, and in daily fear for his life.

The step alarmed the queen, for she had good cause to doubt whether she could support herself against both her sons. Messengers were sent to Alexander, with fair promises, entreating him to return. But Alexander knew his mother too well to trust himself in her hands; and

whilst she was forming a plot against his life as soon as he should arrive in Egypt, he, by means of a written correspondence, was forming a plot against her. The latter was the best laid. Alexander did indeed return, as he had been requested, but he no sooner reached his own country than his mother was put to death.

It is impossible to feel regret for a fate so richly deserved, yet there is no relief in turning from the wicked queen to a son almost equally infamous. Ptolemy Alexander had perhaps the fewest good qualities of any of the family of the Lagidae, even if he did not equal others in the commission of actual crimes. Hated by his people, enfeebled by vice and disease, and blinded to his true condition by his flatterers, he reigned but one year after his mother's death. The Alexandrians then rose against him, his own soldiers turned traitors, and, with his wife and daughter, he took refuge on board a ship in the harbour. His security was but of short duration. The officers of the vessel conveyed him in safety to the coast of Asia Minor, but in crossing from thence to Cyprus he was overtaken by an Egyptian fleet, and killed in the battle which ensued. Ptolemy Alexander was twice married. The name of his first wife is unknown, but he left a son by her, who was named after himself, and a daughter, whom he carried with him in his flight from Egypt. His second wife was Cleopatra Berenice, the daughter of Lathyrus; by her he had no children.

In the middle of the reign of Cleopatra and Alexander a death occurred which severed the province of Cyrene from the kingdom of Egypt. Cyrene had been made into an independent kingdom by the will of Ptolemy Physcon, and given to his illegitimate son, Ptolemy Apion. Apion governed it in peace for twenty years, but it was by buying the favour of the Romans, who were in possession of the territory of Carthage, and consequently his

near and very dangerous neighbours. Cyrene was placed under the guardianship of Rome during the lifetime of Apion, and the inheritance was promised to the republic at his death. When that event took place the Roman Senate, in their usual flattering language, declared Cyrene free, but the freedom was only nominal, and the territory soon became actually a province of Rome.

On the flight of Alexander the Alexandrians sent an embassy to bring back Lathyrus, and he was restored to the throne without opposition. He had by that time reigned eighteen years in Cyprus, and during this period of banishment had shown a wisdom and moderation which, when compared with the conduct of his brother, must have procured him general esteem. The city of Thebes alone refused to submit to him. This once powerful capital had long been decayed both in commerce and wealth, and had quite lost its superiority in arms. But the tombs of its kings, its temples, obelisks and statues, still remained, and with them the memory of departed glory. The inhabitants, with these proud relics before their eyes, had for fifty years been bending under the tyrannical yoke of Ptolemy Physcon and Cleopatra Cocce, and now, when revolution was weakening the regal power in Alexandria, it can scarcely be a matter of surprise that they should rise in insurrection, and endeavour to free themselves from a government which had proved itself so contemptible and intolerable. For three years the brave Copts intrenched themselves within their temples, and withstood the armies of Lathyrus; but bows and hatchets could do little against the power of the Greek weapons, and Thebes at length fell, never more to rise. The distrust of the victors showed itself in the completeness of the ruin of the city. The temples might again be converted into fortresses, and they were therefore demolished, and wide acres of ruin are now all that remains to prove

the greatness of the city, and the strength of the forces employed to overthrow it.

It was during the reign of Lathyrus that the Romans were carrying on a war with Mithridates, King of Pontus, in Asia Minor. Sylla, who was then at the head of the republic, sent to Egypt, to ask the assistance of the king. The ambassador on this occasion was Lucullus, whose name has been rendered famous as much by his luxury as by his military triumphs. The whole Egyptian fleet moved out of the harbour to meet him, an honour which the kings of Egypt had before kept for themselves alone. Lathyrus received him on shore with the greatest respect, lodged him in his palace, and invited him to his table. But he knew his own interest too well to aid in extending the increasing power of the republic, and thus prepare the way for his own subjugation. He at once therefore resolved not to grant the fleet which Lucullus had been sent to request, but, in order to soften his refusal, he offered four times the usual allowance which the kings of Egypt had been accustomed to provide for the Roman ambassadors whilst living at Alexandria, and added besides eighty talents of silver. Lucullus understood the object of this munificence, and refused everything but his expenses, and then sailed hastily to Cyprus, leaving the wonders of Egypt unvisited. The king endeavoured to win his favour by ordering him a fleet of honour to accompany him on his voyage, and giving him his portrait cut in an emerald; but the respect shown to the ambassador could not conceal the fact that he had refused to comply with the wishes, and almost the commands, of the master who sent him, and when soon afterwards Mithridates was conquered by the Romans, it was only by well-timed bribes and skilful embassies that the King of Egypt could

ward off the punishment which was threatened him for his contempt of Sylla.

Egypt was then the only kingdom to the west of Persia which had not submitted to the powerful republic.

Lathyrus reigned six years and a half after his brother's death. He died B.C. 80, leaving a daughter, named Berenice, and two illegitimate sons, each named Ptolemy.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

PTOLEMY ALEXANDER II. AND PTOLEMY AULETES—

B. C. 87—55.

B. C. 80. CLEOPATRA BERENICE, the daughter of Lathyrus, and the widow of Ptolemy Alexander, ascended the throne of Egypt on her father's death. But her reign was destined to be very short. The crown was claimed by Alexander, the son of Ptolemy Alexander by his first wife. This young prince had been brought up in the island of Cos, having been sent there for safety, together with the royal treasures, during the wars which disturbed Egypt under Cleopatra Cæcæ. Cos was at that time considered a kind of fortress, but the Egyptians afterwards lost the command of the sea, and the island was seized by Mithridates, King of Pontus, who carried young Alexander away with him, taking possession at the same time of one of the sacred relics of Egypt—the *chlamys*, or war-cloak, which had belonged to Alexander the Great, and which had been superstitiously considered the safeguard of the empire. Alexander made his escape from Mithridates and fled to Sylla at Rome; and now, on the death of Lathyrus, he endeavoured to bribe the Romans to aid him in gaining the throne by making a will in which he named the Roman people as his heirs. The bribe was accepted, and, after Berenice had been queen for six months, Alexander was sent to Egypt, with orders from the Romans that he should be received as king; whilst, to soften the harshness of the command, he

was told to marry Berenice, and allow her to reign jointly with him.

The order was obeyed in the letter. Alexander landed at Alexandria;—on the nineteenth day afterwards married Berenice, and on that same day put her to death. The crime met with its just reward. His guards rose against him, dragged him from the palace to the Gymnasium, and there killed him.

The legitimate male line of the Ptolemies came to an end on the death of Alexander, and one of the illegitimate sons of Lathyrus was in consequence acknowledged as the rightful heir. He took the name of Neus Dionysus, but he is usually known as Ptolemy Auletes, B. C. 80, or the Piper, from his skill in playing on the flute, an accomplishment of which he was very proud. His character was in no way superior to those of his predecessors, and his reign was dull, unwarlike and vicious. The Romans were now gaining entire control in Egypt, and although they had refrained from actually seizing the country, which they might have done according to the will made in their favour by Alexander, they were its virtual sovereigns. Auletes was permitted to retain his throne only in consideration of very large bribes, and Lentulus, a Roman general, who assisted the Egyptians in clearing their coasts of robbers, put upon his coins the eagle and thunderbolt which formed the stamp of the Ptolemies, in order to show that he had exercised an act of supreme power. Yet, whilst the sovereignty of the country was thus passing into the hands of another people, the old laws of Egypt remained unchanged, and its religion was still flourishing. Some of the finest temples were begun about this period,—those of Dendera and Latopolis, or Esne, being amongst the most remarkable. But a slight change was creeping into the religious belief of the people. The Egyptian gods were

blended with those of the Greeks; fire and water also received divine honours, and every day, when the Temple of Serapis, in Alexandria, was opened, a priest, standing on the steps of the portico, sprinkled water over the marble floor, whilst he held forth fire to the people, and addressed the god in the Egyptian language. The old degrading superstition still, however, remained. The inner walls of the temples glittered with gold and amber, and gems, brought from India and Ethiopia; but when inquiry was made for the image of the god, a priest approached with a solemn countenance, and chanting a hymn, and drawing aside a curtain, exhibited a snake, a crocodile, a cat, or some creature fit only to inhabit a cavern or a desert.

It was about this time that Jerusalem was taken by the Roman army under Pompey, and Judea was then put under a Roman governor. This was felt by the Jews in Egypt as a heavy blow. While their brethren had been the lords of Judea they had considered themselves on an equality with the Greeks in Alexandria; but when the whole Jewish nation fell under the dominion of Rome, the Egyptian Jews sank both in their own estimation and that of the people amongst whom they dwelt. Disregarding the injunctions of their prophets, they had allied themselves with the native Egyptians, even whilst despising them for their religion; and now they found that they were considered in no way superior to them. The privileges they had once enjoyed were taken from them, and they became a degraded and subject race. But they were not alone in their downfall. The whole country was tottering to its ruin. Auletes lost friends year by year, and at length his subjects rose in arms against him, and he fled from Alexandria in disguise, and unattended even by a servant, and went on board a ship which was about to sail for Italy. The vessel touched at Rhodes,

and there Auletes met the great Roman senator, Cato, who was on his way to take possession of the island of Cyprus, which up to this time had been ruled by the brother of Auletes. The king sent word to Cato that he desired to see him, but the proud Roman replied that he was unwell, and if the king required to speak with him he must come to him. Auletes was in no condition to quarrel with a Roman senator. He went to Cato's lodgings, but was received with the greatest incivility; Cato did not even rise from his seat when the king entered the room. Yet he gave him advice which it would have been wise to follow. "The whole wealth of Egypt would," he said, "be a bribe too small for the senators whose favour the king wished to gain, and it would be better far to return to Alexandria and make peace with his rebellious subjects." The counsel was disregarded; Auletes continued his voyage, and in the twenty-fourth year of his reign arrived at Rome as a suppliant.

In the meantime the rebellious Alexandrians had set upon the throne the two eldest daughters of Auletes, Cleopatra Tryphona and Berenice, and an embassy was despatched to Rome to plead their cause against that of their father. The bribes of Auletes prevailed so far that the Senate was gained over to his side. Cicero made a great speech in his behalf, and Cæsar took his part warmly; but he was not able to procure the aid of an army. Pompey indeed, who received the king at his house as his friend and guest, was at one time pointed out as the person who was to undertake the task of replacing the King of Egypt on the throne; but the tribunes of the people, fearing to increase the power of the successful general, interfered to prevent it, bringing forward for this purpose an ancient oracle from the Sybilline books, the meaning of which was said to be:—
"If a King of Egypt, having occasion for aid, should

apply for it, refuse him not your friendship, but give him not troops, lest you should suffer and risk much." The people were so struck with this warning, that no one in the Senate dared openly to support Auletes, who was in consequence obliged to go from one to the other, bribing and entreating, in the hope that some Roman general would at length be led by the promise of money, and the prospect of honour, to espouse his cause, though it would be contrary to the laws of Rome to do so without orders from the Senate.

Gabinus, pro-consul of Syria, was the person who ultimately undertook to restore Auletes. He was gained over by the very large bribe of fifteen hundred thousand pounds, and was urged on by pressing letters from Pompey, and the advice of Mark Antony, the commander of the cavalry in Syria. His task was not one of much difficulty, for the Alexandrians were as usual suffering the evils of a weak government. Cleopatra Tryphæna had died, and as no other child of Auletes was old enough to be joined with Berenice on the throne, they had sent to Syria for Seleucus, the son of Antiochus Grypus, and of Selene, the sister of Lathyrus, to come to Egypt and marry the queen. The Syrian prince did come, but he was low-minded in his tastes, and was even suspected of having stolen the golden sarcophagus in which the body of Alexander was buried. His young wife hated him, and caused him to be strangled on the fifth day after she became his wife. She then married Archelaus, a son of Mithridates Eupator, King of Pontus, and with him she had reigned about two years when her father, Ptolemy Auletes, appeared with a Roman army on the confines of Egypt. Gabinus, as a pretext for quitting his province, had given out that Syria was in danger from the Egyptian fleet. Mark Antony was sent forward with the horse, and, after rout-

ing the Egyptians near Pelusium, entered the city with Auletes. The Egyptian army was at this time in its lowest state of discipline, and when Archelaus ordered the soldiers to throw up a trench around the camp, they refused to obey, saying that ditch-making was not work for soldiers; but that it ought to be done at the cost of the state. As a natural result of this insubordination, the progress of Gabinius was easy and rapid. Egypt was compelled to submit to Auletes; Berenice was put to death; Archelaus died in battle, and Gabinius then returned to Syria, leaving a body of troops to guard the throne of Auletes, and check the rising of the Alexandrians.

One person who had assisted in the re-establishment of the unworthy monarch had great cause to regret his efforts. The large bribe offered to Gabinius was, according to agreement, to be paid before that general undertook the expedition to Egypt, and Auletes, who had no money at command, was obliged to borrow it of Rabirius Posthumus, a Roman who had before lent money to the king, and who knew that all would be lost should he not be restored to his throne. After the re-establishment of Auletes, Rabirius made application for payment; but the king had no means of satisfying him, except by conferring upon him the office of paymaster-general, which was one of great influence and profit, and by the means of which Rabirius might in time have repaid himself his loan. He was indeed for a time the master of the city; all the taxes passed through his hands, and he assumed great state, even wearing a royal robe. But his extortions at length made him odious to the people, and he was apprehended and thrown into prison. He contrived to escape, and went to Rome; but there he was in an equally dangerous position, for a public trial awaited him. The expedition of Gabinius had been illegal; the sums

which he had received were considered as unjust gains, and a large portion having passed into the hands of Rabirius, he was made answerable for them. His case is remarkable because he was defended by Cicero, but, as it is believed, unsuccessfully.

The condition of Egypt during the reign of Auletes was very miserable. The laws were not enforced, crimes were left unpunished, and property in consequence became unsafe. In many cases whole villages lived upon plunder. The inhabitants formed themselves into a society, under a settled chief, and when any merchant or husbandman was robbed, he applied to this chief, who usually restored to him the stolen property, on payment of one fourth of its value. And as the country decayed in wealth, power and population, so also it became less and less noted for science and literature. No distinguished Alexandrian authors are to be reckoned as belonging to the reign of Ptolemy Auletes.

The king died in the twenty-ninth year of his reign, leaving four children, Cleopatra, Arsinoë and two Ptolemies.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CLEOPATRA—B. C. 55—30.

PTOLEMY AULETES, by his will, left his kingdom to Cleopatra and his eldest son, who, according to the Egyptian custom, were to marry and reign jointly; and, in order to secure the execution of this plan, he placed his son under the guardianship of the Roman Senate, sent a copy of his will to Rome, and called upon the Roman people, by the reverence due to the gods, and by the treaties by which they were bound, to see that it was obeyed. But Rome was not then in a condition to interfere for the support of any foreign power. The disputes between the two great generals, Pompey and Julius Cæsar, were engrossing the attention of the people, and, although Pompey was voted tutor to the young king, the office was merely nominal, and whilst he was striving to recover the power which, day by day, was passing into the hands of his rival Cæsar, the government of Egypt underwent a great change. Pothinus, an officer who had the charge of the young Ptolemy, declared his pupil sole monarch, and the will of Auletes and the claims of Cleopatra were completely set aside.

The young princess, who was then about seventeen, and possessed great talent, exquisite beauty, and unrivalled powers of fascination, fled into Syria, where she hoped to raise an army and claim her rights by force of arms. But this was an undertaking requiring time as well as energy, and it was not till the fourth year of her

reign that she confronted her brother at Pelusium; Ptolemy's forces being stationed upon the coast, and Cleopatra's at a little distance. At this juncture, Pompey, having lost the battle of Pharsalia, and being in peril of his life from Cæsar, landed on the shores of Egypt alone. He hoped to receive from the young king some return for the kindness he had shown his father, but Ptolemy had been early trained in selfishness. To befriend Pompey was to make an enemy of Cæsar, and Cæsar then possessed the chief power in Rome. When Pothinus and the other councillors advised that Pompey should be murdered, the king made no effort in his favour. The proverb quoted by Theodotus, his tutor in rhetoric, "Dead men do not bite," was too convincing to be resisted, and Achilles, an Egyptian general, was sent with a body of soldiers to the seaside to receive the great Roman as a friend, and then to kill him as a foe. Achilles handed Pompey out of his galley, but as soon as he touched the shore his head was severed from his body, and carried to the young Ptolemy, who thus for the first time, and without regret, saw the countenance of his father's best friend.

Cæsar, in the meantime, had closely followed Pompey, and landed at Alexandria with a small force before any engagement had taken place between Ptolemy and Cleopatra. He entered the city as a master, the lictors marching before him, bearing the fasces as the mark of his rank. Theodotus, who had counselled the murder of Pompey, approached him with the head of his enemy in his hand; but Cæsar's noble though ambitious heart was little likely to be touched by such a spectacle. He turned away his eyes in horror, and gave orders that it should be interred with all the usual solemnities, and the better to evince his respect for his great rival, he received with kindness and loaded with favours all persons then in Egypt who had adhered to him. This generosity was, however, more

important to the Romans than the Alexandrians. Cæsar to them was only the possessor of an usurped authority. He took upon himself, as Roman consul, to decide the dispute between Cleopatra and her brother, and ordered both to disband their armies, and he demanded besides from the people the payment of a large debt to himself, which had been contracted by the late king. The Alexandrians were excessively irritated by these claims, which were made more intolerable by the contrivance of Pothinus, who, being treasurer, collected the tribute, and, in doing so, made it appear as harassing as possible. He caused only wooden and earthen vessels to be placed upon the king's table, on the pretence that Cæsar had taken all the gold and silver for his debt, and he supplied the Roman soldiers with musty corn, and, when they complained, said "they ought to be satisfied as they lived at other people's cost." The Alexandrians were at length wrought up to a state of excitement and tumult bordering upon insurrection. Cæsar's life was scarcely safe, and as he was unable to leave Egypt on account of contrary winds, he was compelled to send for large reinforcements.

Cleopatra was, at this time, with her army beyond Pelusium, but believing that a personal interview would have more weight with Cæsar in the decision he was about to make as to her claims, than anything she could say by letter, she set sail for Alexandria privately, in a little boat, taking with her no one but Apollodorus, a Sicilian. It was dark night when they arrived at the foot of the walls of the citadel, and to enter without being discovered seemed impossible. In this emergency Cleopatra suggested that she should lay herself down at length in the midst of a bundle of clothes, which Apollodorus wrapped up in a cloth, and fastened with a thong; and in that manner the Egyptian princess was carried through the

port of the citadel to the palace in which Cæsar had taken up his abode.

Her interview was as successful as she had anticipated, and the next day orders were sent to Ptolemy that she was to be acknowledged as queen. The young king was furious with indignation. In the open street he took off his diadem, tore it to pieces, and throw it on the ground, and then, bursting into tears, cried out that he was betrayed, and summoned the aid of the people who had gathered around him. They rushed to Cæsar's residence, and the Roman general would infallibly have been overpowered if he had not had the presence of mind to show himself to the populace from a part of the palace so high that he had nothing to fear whilst standing there. With fair promises he appeased the people for the moment, and the following day he summoned a general assembly, and caused the will of the late king to be read aloud. According to the intention of that will he then decreed that Ptolemy and Cleopatra should reign jointly in Egypt, whilst the younger Ptolemy and Arsinoë should reign in Cyprus. The latter arrangement was a gift, made in order to gain the favour of the Egyptians, as the Romans were actually lords of the island.

With this decision every one was satisfied except Pothinus, who, seeing his own downfall in the success of Cleopatra, and the influence she was gaining over Cæsar, strove by every means in his power to excite the jealousy of the people, and rouse their fears lest Cleopatra should eventually be allowed by Cæsar to reign alone, a possibility entirely repugnant to their habits and prejudices. When a sufficient party was gained over to his side, he sent for Achilles, who had remained with Ptolemy's army at Pelusium, and open war was declared.

The position of Cæsar was now full of danger. He had no friends in the city, and only his small body of

troops in which to trust. Taking with him Cleopatra, who had completely fascinated him, with the two young Ptolemies, their sister Arsinoë, and Pothinus, as hostages for his own safety, he shut himself up in a quarter of the city called the Brachium, where the harbour was his protection on one side, whilst the strong walls of his palace served as a fortress. His great object was to keep possession of his own vessels, which were lying in the harbour and the docks. If they fell into the hands of his enemies he would lose everything; and when the trained bands of Achilles, though repulsed by the Romans in the narrow streets, made their way to the harbour, and there seemed about to gain the victory, Caesar ordered the galleys in the docks to be set on fire, that so at least the Egyptians should not obtain possession of them. But the flames from the burning vessels spread much further than was intended. The docks were near the Museum. The Museum contained the celebrated Alexandrian Library; the fire extended from the ships to the buildings; and the seven hundred thousand volumes, to which Alexandria had owed so much of its renown, were utterly destroyed.

Caesar's best hope now was in fortifying the quarter of the city which he had seized; by those means he trusted to be able to keep his enemies at bay until succour could be sent him from his friends and allies, to whom he sent intelligence of his situation.

He had, however, as he must well have known, traitors in his palace. Pothinus, the governor and first minister of the young king, gave constant intelligence to Achilles of all that passed, and urged him to continue his attacks vigorously, as the Romans were in great want of stores; but one of these letters being at last intercepted, he was put to death. At the same time Ganimedes, an officer of the palace, who had shared the treason of Pothinus, and feared to be par-

taker of his fate, escaped, carrying with him the young princess Arsinoë, whom he had educated. They repaired to the camp of Achilles, where Arsinoë was received with great joy, and immediately proclaimed queen; but Achilles was not long permitted to retain his command. Ganymedes formed a design to supplant him, and by bringing forward accusations of treachery, caused him to be killed, and was then chosen by Arsinoë to be general in his stead. The princess was only eighteen years of age, but she urged on the war with the energy of an experienced general. Neither was Ganymedes at all wanting in talent. Amongst other schemes formed for compelling Caesar to surrender was one which had for its object the spoiling of the water in the Bruchium. The only fresh water in Alexandria was that of the Nile, and in every large house there were vaulted reservoirs in which it was kept. Year by year, at the swelling of the river, the water was brought into the city by a canal, which had been cut on purpose, and was then, by the means of a sluice, turned into the vaulted reservoirs, which were the cisterns of the city. It became clear by degrees, and the masters of houses and their families drank of it. But the poor people were compelled to drink the running water, which was muddy and very unwholesome. The reservoirs were made in such a way that they all had communication with each other, and it was to this circumstance that Ganymedes trusted for the carrying out of his scheme. He contrived to stop up all the communications between the reservoirs in the Roman quarter and those in his own, and then managed to turn sea water into the former. The Roman soldiers were supplied from the cisterns, and they complained that the water was brackish, and day by day the evil increased. The alarm became at length so great that Caesar gave orders to the centurions to put aside all other work and immediately commence digging wells; and notwithstand-

ing the belief which for three centuries had been entertained, that the place contained no springs, in one night they found water sufficient for the whole city.

The next plan of the Alexandrians was to attack Cæsar's ships in the harbour. The inhabitants of the city took the most anxious interest in the result of this naval engagement. They crowded the housetops, and stationed themselves upon the lighthouse in the Island of Pharos, shouting to those of their friends who were near, and making signs to those who were far off. But Cæsar was successful. Two Egyptian ships were taken, and three sunk, and the rest sought safety near the shore and the island, where they were guarded by the troops which kept the harbour.

This protection was a disadvantage for the Romans, and Cæsar resolved to deprive them of it. He placed his cohorts in boats, crossed the harbour, carried the island by storm, and seized the castle at the end of the Heptastadium, the mole which joined the island to the city. But the Alexandrians still held a castle at the city end of the mole, and when Cæsar attacked this he was beaten. His soldiers were driven back into their boats, and his own boat was sunk by the numbers who crowded into it. He himself was only saved by throwing himself into the sea and swimming to the next boat, with the help of one hand, the other—in which were papers of importance,—being held above the water. In this defeat the Romans lost eight hundred men, soldiers and sailors, and Cæsar lost his scarlet *chlamys*, the mark of his rank as a general. The Alexandrians rejoiced to obtain possession of it, and hung it as a trophy upon a pole which they fixed up in the middle of the city.

After this struggle the two parties agreed to a truce. The Alexandrians were tired of the cruel government of Arsinoë and her slave Ganimedes, and desired to have

their king, who was Cæsar's prisoner, and this demand was complied with. The young Ptolemy was profuse in his expressions of good will and promises of friendship, and even entreated, with tears in his eyes, that he might be allowed to remain in the Bruchium, so as not to be deprived of the delight of Cæsar's presence. But, with the perfidy common to his family, he no sooner found himself beyond the reach of the Roman guards than he dried his tears, forgot his friendship, and turned all his energies to schemes for dislodging Cæsar from his position.

About this time the forces from Cilicia and Syria, for which Cæsar had sent, arrived at Pelusium, stormed the city, and marched towards Memphis, intending to cross the Nile near Heliopolis. Ptolemy sent a body of troops from Alexandria to oppose them, whilst Cæsar marched to their assistance. The Egyptians were no match for the increased army of the Romans. Ptolemy was defeated in several battles, and at length his camp was stormed. The Alexandrians fled in disorder to their ships on the Nile, and in effecting his escape the young king was drowned.

Cæsar was now entire master of Egypt, and again he insisted that the will of Auletes should be obeyed. The younger Ptolemy, a boy of eleven years of age, was to share the throne with Cleopatra. Cæsar was himself devoted to Cleopatra, whom he treated as his wife, and for a while he sacrificed everything to her; but, after remaining in Egypt for more than a year, he left her and her infant child, who was called Cæsarion, in order to engage in a war with Pharnaces, King of Pontus. He defeated this monarch with such rapidity that he described his conquest in three words, "*Veni, vidi, vici*"—I came, saw, and conquered.

Whilst engaged in his insignificant war in Egypt, Cæsar had been appointed Dictator at Rome, but he

allowed Mark Antony to exercise the power, and for six months before his return to Italy he had not written even one letter home, being apparently ashamed of the difficulty in which he had entangled himself. Nevertheless, when he did at length reach Rome, he amused himself and the people with a grand triumphal show, in which were exhibited a camelopard, then seen by the Romans for the first time, together with a statue of the Nile god, borne in a chariot, and a representation of the Pharos lighthouse on fire, with painted flames. In this procession walked the unhappy princess Arsinoë, whom Cæsar had carried away from Egypt as his prisoner, following the car of her conqueror, and laden with golden chains. She was indeed set at liberty immediately afterwards, but Cæsar would not permit her to return to Egypt; lest her presence should occasion new troubles. Arsinoë chose the province of Asia for her residence, and was subsequently killed by order of her sister. Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy, who was called her husband, followed Cæsar to Rome and became for a time his guest; but the life of the great Dictator was soon to be brought to a close. Not three years after the display of his triumph to the admiring crowds he was murdered by Brutus and the conspirators who dreaded his power over Roman liberty; and Cleopatra, feeling herself unsafe in Rome, fled privately, and returned to Egypt.

The murder of Cæsar was the signal for a civil war between the party of the conspirators, and the friends of Cæsar; the latter being headed by Octavianus (afterwards Augustus Cæsar) and Mark Antony. Which side Cleopatra intended to espouse was for some time doubtful. She was now sole Queen of Egypt, and had no will but her own to consult, for she had caused her young brother, and nominal husband, to be put to death when he attained the age of fifteen. Perhaps she thought that, by

siding with Augustus and Antony, she might injure the prospects of her son, Cæsarion; for, although she professed to fit out a fleet which should aid Cæsar's friends, her delay and hesitation were so obvious that, after the defeat of the conspirators at the battle of Philippi, Antony sent orders to her to meet him at Tarsus, and answer to the charge of having lent assistance to his enemies.

Tarsus, lying at the foot of the wooded slopes of Mount Taurus, was at that time one of the most important cities on the coast of the Mediterranean. Its merchants enriched it by industry, and ornamented it with public buildings; and the Greek philosophers who frequented it, spread themselves everywhere as leaders, one of them even sailing to the distant island of Britain. But it was now to be the witness of scenes very different from those of industry and learning. Cleopatra, on receiving Antony's message, felt that it would be in vain to endeavour to cope with the power of a Roman general. She could only hope to obtain his favour by exercising the fascination which had triumphed over Cæsar. She was still only twenty-five years of age, her beauty and grace were undiminished, and she determined to appear before the general whom she feared, surrounded by all the pomp and magnificence which might exhibit her loveliness in the greatest perfection. Accompanied by an Egyptian fleet, she sailed for Cilicia, carrying with her rich treasures for presents, and entered the river Cydnus in a magnificent galley, the stern of which was covered with gold, whilst the sails were of scarlet cloth, and the silver oars beat time to the music of flutes and harps. Cleopatra, dressed to represent the goddess Venus, lay under a gold-embroidered awning; boys, like Cupids, stood on each side of her couch, fanning her. Her maidens, attired as graces and sea-nymphs, steered the vessel and handled its silken cordage; and, as she drew near the city, the shout of

perfume, burnt upon the deck, was wafted by the winds to the shores, which were lined with crowds who had come forth to witness the landing of the Egyptian queen.

Antony, seated at his tribunal, was listening to the complaints brought before him, when he suddenly found himself left alone; lictors and servants had alike departed, tempted by the report that the goddess Venus had come in masquerade, to make Bacchus a visit for the good of Asia.

Cleopatra had no sooner landed, than Antony sent to invite her to supper; but she replied that it was her wish to entertain him, and that tents would be prepared upon the banks of the river. The entertainment prepared was of the most magnificent description. The dishes placed upon the table were of gold, set with precious stones, the tent was adorned with purple hangings, and the couches were ornamented with gold. Antony was lavish in his admiration, but not so lavish as Cleopatra in her gifts. What he saw was, she said, but a trifle, and she begged that he would accept the whole as a gift from her. A similar spectacle of magnificent folly was exhibited the next day, but on a yet grander scale. Antony brought friends and generals to the entertainment, and Cleopatra again bestowed on him the gold upon the table, whilst she gave to each of his friends the couch upon which he sat. A succession of these dinners followed, and one evening, when Antony playfully blamed her wastefulness, and told her that it was impossible to fare in a more costly manner, Cleopatra assured him that the next entertainment should cost ten thousand sesteria, or sixty thousand pounds sterling. Antony believed this to be impossible, and laid a wager that the promise would not be kept. On the following day they met as usual, and partook of a splendid repast. Antony called upon Cleopatra to reckon the cost of the meats

and wines, but her reply was that they were not to be counted, she would herself eat and drink the ten thousand sesteritia.' The dishes were then removed, and a cup of vinegar was placed upon the table. Cleopatra wore in her ears two pearls, the largest known in the world, and which she had received as part of her royal inheritance. Taking one of these, she dropped it into the vinegar, watched till it was dissolved, and then drank it off. Plancus, one of the guests who had been made the judge of the wager, stopped her as she was about to do the same with the other, and decided that Antony had lost his wager. The pearl which was saved was afterwards cut in two, and made into a pair of earrings for the statue of Venus, in the Pantheon at Rome.

By this time, all idea of an accusation against Cleopatra was at an end. She had completely won the heart of Antony by her beauty, grace, and varied talents; her wit being, as we are told, remarkable, her voice exquisitely melodious, whilst she was believed to be the only sovereign of that period who could understand the languages of all her subjects, Greek, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Troglodytic, Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac. Antony could refuse her nothing, and the first favour which he granted was the murder of her sister Arsinoë!

The interests and the duty of Antony, at this time, called him back to Rome, where his faithful wife, Fulvia, was with difficulty keeping up his influence against that of Augustus, who had now become his rival for power; but, infatuated by the arts of Cleopatra, he followed her to Alexandria. There the same scenes of reckless extravagance and absurdity, which had been exhibited at Tarsus, were repeated. Philotas, a physician, who was following his studies at Alexandria, told the grandfather of Plutarch, the biographer, that he was once invited to see Antony's dinner cooked. Amongst the meats, were

eight boars roasting whole. The cook explained to him that there were not more than ten or twelve guests expected, but as everything was to be served up in perfection, and as Antony was very unpunctual, it was necessary to have, at least, eight dinners ready, in order that one might be sent up at any moment.

Whilst Anthony was thus humoured in his luxurious extravagance, Cleopatra spared no efforts to please him in other ways. Her own power depended upon his, for if he turned against her, she well knew her kingdom would be taken from her. She never lost sight of him therefore, but hunted and gambled with him, was present when he exercised his troops, and, indeed, devoted herself to the one sole object of so amusing him that he should have no time for disgust. But the puerility of these amusements was excessive. Antony was one day fishing, and was greatly displeased because he caught nothing. Cleopatra was present, and he was unwilling, before her, to appear unsuccessful. He contrived, therefore, to give an order to some fishermen who were in attendance, to dive under the water and fasten some of their large fishes to his hook, which he then drew up. The queen perceived his artifice, but affected great admiration and surprise at his good fortune. The next day she invited a party of friends to join her again in a fishing expedition, and when they were all in the boats, and Antony had thrown his line, she gave a secret order to one of her own servants to dive, as the fisherman had done on the preceding day, and fasten a large salt fish to Antony's hook. When the salt fish was drawn up, a shout of laughter arose, whilst Cleopatra turned to Antony and said, "You may leave fishing to us petty princes of Pharos and Canopus; your business is to fish for cities, provinces, and kingdoms."

Notwithstanding the efforts made to detain him,

Antony, however, was at length recalled to Europe. Letters arrived, which told him that his wife and brother had been driven out of Rome by Augustus, and he left Egypt in consequence; but before he reached Rome, Fulvia was dead; and Antony, selfish and unfeeling, made almost immediately afterwards a marriage of policy with Octavia, the sister of Augustus.

It was thought that this marriage would lead him to forget Cleopatra; but the following year he engaged in a war in Syria, and sent a message to the Egyptian queen, begging that she would join him there. Cleopatra, who pretended that she was the lawful wife of Antony, had felt much aggrieved by his marriage with Octavia, but this did not prevent her from complying with his request; and, when she once more met him, her power over him appeared greater than ever. She persuaded him to give her the provinces of Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria, the island of Cyprus, part of Judea, and part of Arabia; and she also entreated for the death of Herod, King of Judea, who had lately received his kingdom from the Romans. He had urged Antony to break through the ties which bound him to Cleopatra, and rouse himself to withstand the increasing power of Augustus; and this counsel the queen could not forgive. She failed, however, in her efforts. Herod lived, and retained his dominions, but he was in such fear of Antony, that some time afterwards, when the latter, accompanied by Cleopatra, visited Damascus, he was compelled to receive the queen with civility, though he was quite aware of the hatred which she bore him.

Yet, in the midst of her crimes and follies, Cleopatra retained the best characteristic of her family, an interest in literature. Amongst the other gifts bestowed upon her by Anthony, was the large library of the city of Pergamus, which had been the object of so much jealousy to

Ptolemy Physcon. Cleopatra placed the two hundred thousand volumes in the Temple of Serapis, at Alexandria; and thus, though the great collection attached to the Museum had been destroyed by Caesar's troops, Alexandria again possessed the largest library in the world, while Pergamus ceased to be at all distinguished for its learning.

After the meeting in Syria, Cleopatra returned to Egypt, and Antony pursued his conquests in Parthia, but when they were completed, his anxiety to be with Cleopatra became so great, that he seriously endangered the lives of his soldiers by the marches which he compelled them to make in a season of great severity. His wife, Octavia, who was as remarkable for her virtues as Cleopatra for her vices, would willingly have joined him, and left Rome for that purpose, but he sent a message to prevent her from continuing her journey, and, at the instigation of Cleopatra, even refused to accept the presents which he was informed she had prepared. Octavia returned to Rome to employ herself in educating her own children and those of Antony and Fulvia, and her husband hastened to Egypt, and once more gave himself up to the degrading influence exercised over him by Cleopatra, whilst he assumed for himself a dignity belonging only to royalty. In a public assembly, called for the express purpose of settling the government of Egypt and the provinces, and in which he and Cleopatra appeared seated on golden thrones, their children were declared to be kings, the children of kings. Large provinces were bestowed upon them, and Cæsarion was, according to Antony's decree, thenceforth associated with Cleopatra in the government. To the queen herself Antony gave on this occasion the whole of the booty which he had taken in his Parthian wars, and also his prisoner Tigranes, the son of the Parthian king.

But at the very moment when Antony was thus wasting all that was most valuable, both in time, character and wealth, upon the unworthy queen, he had no trust in her. Now that his power in Rome was lessened, he dreaded lest she should turn against him. He lived in fear of being poisoned by her, and would not venture to eat or drink in her palace without first seeing that the food was tasted by herself. Cleopatra however had as yet no such intentions, and only laughed at his distrust. In order to convince him of the folly of his suspicions, she one day had the flowers with which he was to be crowned, as he reclined at her dinner table, dipped in deadly poison. During dinner she took some blossoms from her own garland, and playfully dipped them into her cup to flavour the wine. Antony followed her example, and was about to raise his cup to his lips when Cleopatra stopped him. "I," she said, "am the enemy against whom you take precautions. If I could have endured to live without you, that draught would have given me the opportunity." She then ordered the wine to be given to one of the condemned criminals, and sent Antony out to see that the man died in drinking it.

But these scenes of vice and folly were soon to end. Antony's absence in Egypt had strengthened the party of Augustus, and his degrading conduct had lowered him in the general esteem. His behaviour to Octavia was looked upon with the gravest disapprobation,—a feeling increased to indignation when at length he sent messengers to Rome declaring himself divorced from her, and ordering her and her children to quit his house. If Augustus had had no other cause of complaint against Antony, this treatment of his sister would in itself have been sufficient to cause a rupture. When joined to the claims of ambition, its natural result was war,—declared, however, not against Antony, but Cleopatra, or rather,

as Augustus scornfully remarked, against Mardion, her slave, and Iras and Charmian, her waiting women, for these had the chief management of Antony's affairs.

The preparations for the conflict were made on the grandest scale. Five hundred ships of war, bearing upon the head and stern towers of an enormous height, were prepared, and in them was collected an army of two hundred thousand foot, and twelve thousand horse. In the midst of this great fleet was to be seen the galley of Cleopatra, rich in its golden ornaments and purple sails; its flags floating in the wind, whilst trumpets and war-like instruments made the air resound with notes of joy and triumph. Antony followed the queen in a galley almost equally splendid. Cleopatra herself, intoxicated with vanity and ambition, declared that she was about to attack the Roman Capitol, and utterly to subvert the great empire. Antony's fleet advanced to Corcyra, whilst Augustus gathered his armies at Brundisium; but, before any engagement could take place, the stormy season obliged both parties to retire into safe ports, and defer the re-assembling of their forces till the following year.

In the autumn of that year, B.C. 31, the great naval battle took place which was to decide the fate of Antony and Cleopatra. It was fought upon the 2nd of September, at the mouth of the Gulf of Ambracia, near the city of Actium, and in sight of both the land armies. The event was doubtful for some time; but the folly of Cleopatra was the ruin of her own cause. She had followed Antony, as was her custom, but when the battle began she was seized with such extreme fear, that, although in no danger, she took to flight, and drew after her the whole of the Egyptian squadron. Antony, forgetting everything in his feeling for Cleopatra, followed her, and the victory was yielded to

Augustus, though Antony's troops fought so bravely that it was not till night that the battle was finally decided.

Cleopatra had sailed for the coast of Peloponnesus. When Antony overtook her, he entered her galley, and seating himself apart, and burying his face in his hands, remained for three days without speaking to her, brooding over his infatuated folly, and the misfortunes which it had brought upon him. At the end of that time he recovered, and appeared perfectly reconciled to the queen, and it was then agreed that they should separate,—Cleopatra was to return to Alexandria, whilst Antony repaired to Libya, where he had left a large army to guard the frontier of Egypt.

But fresh misfortunes awaited him. The commander of the Libyan forces had declared for Augustus,—and this was the first news which reached Antony when he landed in Africa. He was so overcome by it that he was with difficulty prevented from killing himself; and having now no other choice, he followed Cleopatra to Alexandria to wait the course of events.

Cleopatra was almost equally despairing at heart. She formed the most wild designs of transporting her ships by the canal across the Isthmus to the head of the Red Sea, and from thence flying to some unknown land to avoid the conqueror. But, although she talked of these things openly, her secret dependence was upon the powers of fascination which had gained the hearts of Caesar and Antony; and to save her crown she was willing to give up him who had sacrificed honour for her. Before Augustus and his victorious army reached Alexandria, negotiations were entered into between him and Cleopatra, by which Antony was to be sacrificed; whilst the latter would have consented to relinquish all his dignities, and to live thenceforward at Athens as a private indi-

vidual, if only the crown of Egypt could have been secured to Cleopatra and her children. Both were secretly sending embassies to Augustus, whilst they openly passed their time in scenes of the same wild revelry and reckless extravagance which had before marked their daily life.

Some months were away before Augustus actually entered Egypt. When at length, in the Spring of the next year, he appeared with his army before Pelusium, having previously taken possession of Syria, Seleucus, the governor of the city, who had received secret orders from Cleopatra, yielded the place to him without waiting a siege. The rumour of the treason spread to Alexandria, and Cleopatra, with her usual cruel treachery, in order to save herself from suspicion, actually placed the governor's wife and children in the power of Antony, that he might revenge himself by putting them to death.

Augustus, when he reached Alexandria, encamped near the Hippodrome. He was in hopes of speedily making himself master of the city, for he believed that Cleopatra would aid his entrance. Antony, however, who knew nothing of the queen's secret manœuvres, made a vigorous sally, and after pursuing a detachment of horse to the gates of the Roman camp, returned victorious into the city, to receive the deceitful praises of Cleopatra and the acclamations of the people.

The following morning he again ordered out his forces, both on land and sea, intending to engage those of Augustus; but traitors surrounded him on all sides. His land army was stationed upon some eminences near the city, and from thence he could keep his vessels in sight. But whilst Antony stood upon the hill watching to see the success of the attack, he beheld the Egyptian admiral strike his flag as he came in view of the vessels of Augustus,

and surrender his whole fleet to the enemy. This treason revealed Cleopatra's treachery. In rage and despair Antony returned to the city, though it was only to find himself forsaken by his cavalry; and he then hurried to the palace, bent upon avenging himself on the faithless queen.

Cleopatra was not there. Foreseeing the wrath of Antony, she had fled to a large monument, which she had herself built, adjoining the temple of Isis. Here, for some time previous, she had collected all her treasures—gold, silver, emeralds, pearls, ebony, ivory, and a large quantity of perfumes and aromatic wood—prepared, as it seemed, for a funeral pile, in which her riches and herself might perish together. Having secured herself there with bars and bolts, she sent word to Antony that she was dead.

Antony doubted not that she had killed herself, and believed that her example was a noble one. He drew his sword and plunged it into his breast. But the wound, though dangerous, was not at once fatal, and whilst he was yet fainting from it a messenger arrived to say that Cleopatra yet lived, and desired that he would join her. His servants carried him to the door of the monument. The queen, fearing treachery, would not suffer it to be opened, but a cord was let down from the window, and by this means she and her two women attempted to draw Antony up. The effort almost exhausted Cleopatra's strength, whilst Antony, in the agonies of death, and stretching out his feeble hands to the miserable woman who had so tempted and deceived him, was a piteous spectacle to the people below. He was at last lifted in at the window, but he was too far gone for hope, and after a few words of affection for Cleopatra, who appeared to be in a paroxysm of grief, he expired.

By this time the city was in the hands of Augustus. He had found the gates open, and his troops had taken possession of it without resistance. He himself entered it on foot, leaning upon the arm of the philosopher Arius; and, summoning the Greek citizens to the Gymnasium, he told them that he pardoned them for three reasons—first, because Alexander was the founder of their city; secondly, for its beauty; and thirdly, for the sake of their fellow-citizen Arius, whose merit and learning he esteemed. Yet the advice subsequently given by Arius indicated no high love of virtue; for when a question arose in the mind of Augustus as to the treatment of Cæsarion, the philosopher remarked “that there ought not to be two Cæsars;” and Augustus, following the hint, caused the young prince to be killed.

The great object of Augustus now was to take Cleopatra alive. Gallus, one of his officers, was sent to the entrance of the monument, and contrived to draw her into conversation, though she would not consent that the door should be unfastened. In the meantime, three men scaled the window, and went down to the door where Cleopatra was still conversing with Gallus. Cleopatra turned her head, saw them, and would have stabbed herself, but one of the men snatched the dagger from her hand, and made her at once his prisoner.

By the command of Augustus she was carefully guarded, but treated with all respect, and he himself soon paid her a visit of condolence. Cleopatra made a full display of her grief, hoping that so she might touch his heart, but Augustus was cold and cautious. He listened to her tale of sorrow, declined the offer of all her jewels, made fair promises of generous treatment, and left her, thinking doubtless that he had deceived her into confidence.

Cleopatra, however, was not deceived. She saw plainly

that Augustus desired her to live only that she might grace his triumph, and she resolved to defeat his object by self-destruction. In order to divert his attention, she entreated permission to pay a last visit to the tomb of Antony, and when this was over she returned to her apartments, dressed herself splendidly, and partook of a repast which she had commanded to be served up with magnificence. She then sat down and wrote a letter to Augustus, informing him of her purpose. Her two women, Charmian and Iras, remained in the room, and Cleopatra, ordering them to give her a basket of fruit, in which she had previously directed that an asp should be concealed, caused herself to be stung by the insect. The poison rapidly took effect, and in a few minutes the too celebrated Queen of Egypt was dead.

Cleopatra was thirty-nine years of age, and had reigned twenty-two years, fourteen of which were in conjunction with Antony. She was buried in his tomb with splendour, such as was due to the last sovereign of independent Egypt.

From that period the country became a province of Rome, and followed the fortunes of the empire. The reputation of Alexandria for learning and philosophy was long retained, and the studies which were there carried on exercised a considerable influence upon the early Christian writers and teachers—the attempt to engraft Christian doctrines upon heathen systems of metaphysics and morality being the origin of many heretical opinions.

When the Arabs attacked the Eastern empire, Egypt fell under their power. It was conquered by Amrou, the lieutenant of the Caliph Omar, A. D. 638. At that time the Alexandrian library was finally destroyed, by the command of Omar, who declared that if the volumes contained the same wisdom as the Koran they were use-

less, and if they did not they were injurious. In either case they were to be burnt; and the books, which were mostly written on papyrus, were accordingly sent to heat the public baths of the city.

In the year 1517 Egypt fell under the power of Turkey, to which country it has continued subject up to the present time. The Coptic race, the descendants of the ancient Egyptians, are Christians, but they are completely subject to the ruling Mahometans.







HISTORY OF BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA.



CHAPTER I.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE PRIMITIVE EMPIRES OF BABYLONIA, OR CHALDEA, AND ASSYRIA—B. C. 2000—1273.

THE records of the events connected with the Babylonian and Assyrian empires, especially the latter, are so few, that, looking at them in the light of common history, they would appear to be but of little worth. The titles of kings, whose names can scarcely be decyphered, and the lists of their conquests over nations now blotted from the earth, might well be deemed unworthy of more than a passing notice. But their intimate association with the sacred history of the Jews, invests them with an interest which partakes somewhat of the sacred character.

The monarchs of Assyria and Babylon were the appointed ministers of the Divine vengeance. The record of that vengeance is preserved in the Scriptures, and the names of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar are familiar to us in their relation with the kings of Israel and Judah, and the captivity which was the fulfilment of prophecy.

But a new glimpse of these ancient empires has lately been afforded us. Assyria especially has been brought before us in its independent greatness by the discovery of the ruins of its magnificent palaces, and the decyphering

of the inscriptions on its obelisks. Sacred history and profane now stand, as it were, side by side, and call upon us to accept their joint testimony to the truth of the events hitherto supposed to be recorded by one alone. God has given us a witness from beneath the sandy mounds of the Desert, which can never again be silenced. He has laid bare the records left by the mighty kings of Assyria themselves, and in those records has testified by a distinct evidence, which cannot be gainsayed, that the Scriptures, in narrating the events connected with the miraculous history of the Jewa, is narrating facts which even the most sceptical cannot venture to disbelieve. *

Well, indeed, may we be thankful for this new revelation of the past, and when we turn to the scanty records of Assyria, instead of marvelling that so little should have been handed down to us, rather adore the wonderful Providence which has, for the most part, preserved precisely those inscriptions which throw light upon the history contained in God's own Word, and the events connected with His own people, and through them with ourselves and all the professed believers in Christianity.

Between the Caspian Sea and the head of the Persian Gulf there extends a mountainous country, which reaches its greatest elevation in the snow-white cone of Ararat, rising to the height of more than 17,000 feet above the level of the sea. It is this region which gives birth to two of the most celebrated rivers of the world, the Euphrates and the Tigris. They flow parallel to each other, through a basin of 1850 miles in length, and fall by a common channel into the mouth of the Persian Gulf. But, although thus taking the same direction, and

* See Blunt's Scriptural Coincidences.

finally uniting, the two rivers are widely distant in certain portions of their course, and the tract enclosed by them forms a large country, now known as the Turkish province of Algézira, but anciently called Mesopotamia, or The Two Rivers.

The course of rivers has, at all periods, decided the colonization of a country. But the Scriptures give us reason to believe that the settlement of the descendants of Noah—who repeopled the world after the Deluge—was not made without the direction of the patriarch, the second father of the human race. About a century after the flood, whilst Noah must have been still living, mention is made of Peleg, the son of Eber, one of the family of Shem, in whose days the earth was divided; and Moses, when in his dying song he recounts to the Israelites their wonderful history, thus alludes to the same fact: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will show thee, thy elders, and they will tell thee; when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the numbers of the children of Israel." (Deut. xxxii, 7, 8.)

The region known as Mesopotamia, or Babylonia, was destined to form part of the inheritance of the children of Shem, but the Semites do not appear to have been the earliest inhabitants. In the Bible genealogy of the sons of Noah, mention is made of Cush, the eldest son of Ham, and we are there told: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty hunter before the LORD:" wherefore it is said: "Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the LORD." And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. With the exception of Babel, or Babylon, these cities, with others mentioned in the early chapters of Genesis, especially Calah and Resen, Ellasar

and Ur of the Chaldees, were, till within these few years, mere names. Recently, however, the mounds of Mesopotamia have been searched, and bricks and stones, buried for nearly 3000 years, have been discovered, which tell us exactly where each of these cities stood.

B. C. 2234. Babylon, being founded by the grandson of Ham, may be considered as originally a Hamite kingdom, probably established about the year B. C. 2234. This belief is confirmed by modern researches,—the bricks which have been discovered amongst the ruins of the Babylonian cities bearing characters similar to those used by the ancient Egyptians, who are universally allowed to have been the descendants of Ham. These inscriptions record the names of the various kings who were founders of the cities, and of the gods to whom the buildings and temples were dedicated; but they have been only imperfectly decyphered. One, however, the letters of which are somewhat different from the others, is interesting from the probability that Kudur Mapula, the king whose name it bears, was identical with the Chedorlaomer mentioned in Scripture, as making war against Sodom and the cities of the plain; and who, having taken Lot prisoner, was afterwards pursued and defeated by Abraham. A title, which may be translated, "The Ravager of Cities," is in the inscriptions annexed to the name of Kudur Mapula, and it is supposed that he was not one of the early line of kings, but the leader of a conquering race, termed in Scripture Elamites, and descended from Elam, the son of Shem. Kudur B. C. 2000. Mapula is supposed to have lived about the year 2000, B. C., and to have been the founder of what is properly termed the Chaldean empire.

Chaldæa, it may be remarked, was, strictly speaking, a province of Babylonia, on the borders of the Arabian Desert, and at the head of the Persian Gulf. In a wider

sense, the term is applied to the whole of Babylonia, and even to the Babylonian empire, on account of the supremacy which the Chaldeans acquired at Babylon. The origin of this tribe, to which the kings and priests belonged, is somewhat doubtful. It is supposed, however, that they emigrated from Susiana to the banks of the Euphrates, and, being headed by Kudur Mapula, dispossessed the Hamite race.

The Chaldeans introduced into Babylon the worship of the heavenly bodies, which they also symbolized in the forms of idols. The priests formed a caste, and cultivated sciences, especially astronomy. They knew the apparent motions of the sun, the moon, and five of the planets; they calculated eclipses of the moon, divided the zodiac into twelve constellations, and the year into twelve months, and measured time by the sun-dial.

The history of Chaldaea, or Babylon, for about 700 years after the reign of Kudur Mapula, is wholly uncertain. The inscriptions on the bricks which have been found, give the names of kings, and their territorial titles, but tell us nothing of their foreign or domestic history. During this time, another kingdom had grown into importance, which derived its origin from Babylon, and was intimately connected with it, and which the discoveries and investigations of modern days, have rendered peculiarly interesting. In the Book of Genesis it is said, "Out of that land (Babylon) went forth Asehur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen, between Nineveh and Calah; the same is a great city." (Gen. x, 11, 12.) Or, according to the interpretation of the marginal reading, "he went forth into Assyria, and builded Nineveh." This latter translation would imply that Nineveh was built by Nimrod himself, and such has been the tradition of profane writers; but, however this may be, it appears certain that Nineveh was

built after the city of Babylon, which the Scriptures mention as having been founded before the dispersion of mankind, and that Assyria Proper, the country of which Nineveh was the capital, was a powerful province of Chaldaea, though, probably, not a wholly independent state, from the time of its first settlement. It was a region comprised between the river Tigris, on the west and south-west, and what are now the Kurdistan mountains, on the east. On the north, it was overlooked by the mountain range of Armenia; and south, and south-eastward, lost itself in the level country forming the provinces of Babylonia and Susiana, and extending around the head of the Persian Gulf. The extent of Assyria Proper was small. It was a territory about 280 miles in length, and rather more than 150 in breadth; thus, a little exceeding the size of Ireland.

From all that we know, it may be inferred that Assyria was, at an earlier period, very productive, and well peopled, and that its inhabitants were a hardy, brave, and energetic people; but what has been called their history, is for many centuries merely legendary, and the fables related of their monarchs are only worthy of notice as having been handed down to us by Greek writers, and, in consequence, received as facts, and frequently alluded to both by ancient and modern writers.

This legendary history states that Nimrod was succeeded in the government of Nineveh, by his son Ninus, a great conqueror, who was assisted in his undertakings by Semiramis, the wife of one of his chief officers. Semiramis, it is said, was a woman of singular courage and wisdom; and Ninus, when laying siege to the city of Bactria, attacked the citadel according to her directions, and having by that means made himself master of the town, became possessed of an enormous treasure. The influence exercised by Semiramis over the king excited, however,

the jealousy of her husband, and, in consequence, he killed himself. Ninus then married Semiramis, returned to Nineveh, and soon afterwards died, and left the government of his kingdom to his wife. Semiramis now applied all her thoughts to rendering her name immortal. She desired to surpass all her predecessors in magnificence, and it is stated that, with this view, she built the city of Babylon, which would of course imply that the country of Babylon was subject to her. The Greek writers give minute descriptions of the grandeur of this city, but they must all belong to a much later period. There is reason, indeed, to believe that there were several queens of the name of Semiramis, and that the sovereign who was really celebrated lived, at least, a thousand years after the period assigned to the wife of Ninus, and was a Babylonian, not an Assyrian princess. The Greek legends further tell us that the wife of Ninus, not satisfied with the extent of the dominions left her by her husband, enlarged them by the conquest of the greater part of Ethiopia. Whilst in that country, she was induced to visit the great temple of Jupiter Ammon, and inquire of the oracle how long she had to live. The answer failed to give the exact years, but Semiramis was informed that she should not die until her son Ninyas conspired against her, and that after her death she should receive divine honours. The warning did not prevent her from undertaking still further conquests. She raised an innumerable army out of all the provinces of her empire, and set out on an expedition against India.

The strength of the Indian armies consisted in the number of their elephants, and Semiramis, being aware of this, caused a multitude of camels to be accoutred in the form of elephants, in the hopes of deceiving the enemy. The Indian king having received notice of the approach of the Queen of Assyria, sent ambassadors to ask her

who she was, and with what right she had dared to attack his dominions.

"Tell your master," replied Semiramis, "that in a little time I, myself, will let him know who I am;" and, deigning no further explanation, she went on towards the river Indus, and, causing a number of boats to be prepared, attempted to pass it with her army. Her passage was disputed, but she put the enemy to flight, with great loss, and encouraged by this success advanced still further into the country, leaving behind her sixty thousand men to guard the bridge of boats which she had built over the river. When the Indian king found that Semiramis had proceeded far into the heart of his dominions, he determined to attack her a second time, and on this occasion the victory proved to be on his side. The counterfeit elephants could not withstand the shock of the true animals, who crushed whatever came in their way, and completely routed the Assyrian army. Semiramis endeavoured to rally her troops, but in vain. The Indian king, perceiving that she was engaged in the fight, advanced towards her, and wounded her in two places, though not mortally. A swift horse carried her beyond pursuit, and she fled with the scattered remains of her army to the Indus. Numbers perished in attempting to cross the river, and when all those that could save themselves were on the other side, Semiramis destroyed the bridge, and thus stopped the enemy's pursuit; the Indian king being likewise induced to give it up, by the command of an oracle. An exchange of prisoners was then effected, and Semiramis returned to her own dominions with scarcely one third of her army.

Some time afterwards, a discovery was made that Ninyas, the son of Semiramis, was plotting against his mother, and that one of the queen's chief officers had offered him his assistance. This treachery brought back

to Semiramis the prophecy of the oracle of Jupiter Ammon. She believed that her end was approaching, and immediately took measures to abdicate her throne, and deliver up the government to her son. When this was done, she withdrew from the sight of all men, and prepared to die, hoping that divine honour might soon be paid her, according to the promise of the oracle. Her wish, it is said, was fulfilled, for she was worshipped by the Assyrians under the form of a dove.

Ninyas in no way resembled his warlike mother. He gave himself up to luxury, and his successors, for many generations, followed his example.

Sardanapalus, the last monarch of the early fabulous dynasty, is said to have surpassed his predecessors in effeminacy and cowardice. He never left his palace, but spent his time amongst a company of women, whose dress and employment he imitated. His glory consisted in the immensity of his treasures, and his happiness was found in riotous feasts. The Greek writers say that he ordered two verses to be prepared for his tomb, which imported that he carried away with him all that he had eaten, and all the pleasures which he had enjoyed, but left everything else behind him. This inglorious prince was thought to have reigned over extensive dominions, which included Babylon and Media, and the governors of these two states are stated to have formed a conspiracy against him. A revolt took place in Nineveh, and Sardanapalus hid himself in the inmost part of his palace. He was induced afterwards to take up arms in his own defence, but, being overcome, he shut himself up in Nineveh, trusting to an ancient oracle which declared that the city could never be taken unless the river became its enemy. Believing this to be an impossibility, he considered himself safe; but a violent inundation of the Tigris broke down the city wall, and opened a passage

for the rebels, and Sardanapalus then felt that the hour of his downfall had arrived. He had but one wish left, to die in such a manner as to cover the ignominy of his life; and collecting his treasures, his women, and his slaves, he placed them on a vast pile of wood, and setting fire to it, burnt himself with them.

This legend bears some resemblance to events which afterwards took place, but it is asserted to belong to a period several centuries before they actually occurred.



CHAPTER II.

EARLY ASSYRIAN EMPIRE—B. C. 1273—747.

WE must now turn to the real history of Assyria, or, at least, to those few and meagre facts which have been made known since the opening of the great mounds, beneath which the Assyrian cities for years lay buried. Whether these mounds cover separate cities, or portions of the one great capital, Nineveh, is not accurately determined; but it is supposed, upon the best authority, that the several masses of ruins are the remains, not so much of distinct cities, as of royal palaces, with their connected buildings and parks; and that these buildings, with the habitations of the people gathered round them, and uniting them, formed Nineveh, "that great city," as it is termed by the prophet *Jonah*. Four huge masses of buildings have now been excavated. They form very nearly a perfect parallelogram, and are known as the ruins of Kouyunjik, Nimroud, Karamless, and Khorsabad. There is also a smaller mound near Kouyunjik, called Nebbi Yunus, which is considered to have formed part of the original Nineveh. The whole of the plains bordering the Tigris are, indeed, covered with mounds, and strewn with bricks and mortar. The Assyrian buildings of the oldest date have been found at Nimroud, which some persons consider as not belonging to Nineveh, but marking the site of the city called, in the Old Testament, Calah. The date of the different masses of ruins cannot, however, be decided by the date of the palaces belonging to them, as it appears that successive sovereigns built new palaces in

various parts of the city. The walls, and other defences of Nineveh, may still be traced; and there were also extensive moats on the north, south, and east sides. It was, no doubt, practicable for defensive purposes, to surround the whole city with a very effectual water barrier, and thus the prophet Nahum compares Nineveh with No, or Thebes, in Egypt, and asks, "Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea?" (Nahum iii. 8.)

All that is really known of the monarchs of the Assyrian kingdom is, with the exception of the few facts mentioned in Scripture, derived from the inscriptions and bas reliefs on the walls of their palaces, and from records graven on bricks and cylinders. The bas reliefs are upon alabaster slabs, which rise to the height of eight or nine feet from the pavement of the floor, and the scenes depicted upon them are almost exclusively warlike. They are, therefore, uninteresting to persons anxious only to learn somewhat of the domestic and social life of the Assyrians, but they give an idea, though necessarily a vague and uncertain one, of the foreign wars of the different kings.

B. C. 1273. The earliest known monarch of Assyria is a certain Bel-lush, whose name is found upon the bricks, and who is believed to have been king, B. C. 1273, about the period when Judges ruled in Israel, and soon after the time when the connection between Assyria and Babylonia had ceased. After him followed a series of independent princes, who formed what is called the First or Upper dynasty of Assyrian kings. They appear to have reigned for about 526 years. A cylinder, bearing the name of Tiglath Pileser I., who was a prince of this dynasty, and reigned, as is supposed, about B. C. 1110, is the earliest document of a purely his-

torical character which has yet been found. This prince represents himself as a great conqueror, and gives a sketch of the glories of some of his ancestors; but, except as aiding the researches of the learned, these inscriptions have but little interest. The names of five of the successors of Tiglath Pileser I. have been discovered, and their dates assigned with some probability. They appear to have been in no way distinguished by their conquests, and are remembered only by the additions made by them to their B. C. 930. palaces. After them we have the records of

Asshur-dani-pal, or Sardanapalus (about B. C. 930), a prince of a very different character from the Sardanapalus of the legends. His annals have been discovered in very complete condition, and prove that he was a great conqueror, who carried his arms through Western Asia from Chaldaea to the coasts of the Mediterranean. He commences his great historical record with a passage which may thus be translated: "In the beginning of my reign, during the first year, when the sun-god, the regent of all things, had cast his motive influence over me, seated in majesty on my royal throne, and swaying in my hand the sceptre of power over mankind, I assembled my chariots and warriors;" and then he proceeds to enumerate his great and successful enterprises, styling himself "the conqueror from the upper passage of the Tigris to Lebanon and the Great Sea, who has reduced under his authorities all countries from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof." It is thought probable that he received tribute from Eth-baal, King of the Sidonians, who was the father of Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, King of Israel. Sardanapalus was the founder of what has been designated as the North West Palace at Nimroud, the most ancient building which has been discovered, and which must indeed have been laid in ruins before the other palaces hidden under the same mound were

built. The greater portion of the Assyrian sculptures now in the British Museum were taken from this palace. When perfect it must have been nearly square, formed of hewn stone, and about 360 feet in length and 300 in breadth. It stood on a raised platform overlooking the Tigris, with a grand façade to the north, fronting the town, and another to the west, commanding the river. The interior consisted of a single central hall, about 120 feet long and 90 wide, probably open to the sky; round this were grouped a number of ceiled chambers, some larger and some smaller, and generally communicating with one another. The ceilings were of cedar, brought apparently from Mount Lebanon. The walls, to a certain height above the floor, were panelled by slabs of sculptured alabaster; above they were coated with plaster. The smaller chambers were dark, but this circumstance, which appears to us so singular and inconvenient, would be far less so in the East, where the absence of light is considered essential to secure a cool temperature. The sculptures and decorations in these rooms could only have been seen by torchlight. The larger chambers were lighted either by openings in the roof, or by apertures in the upper part of the wall, near the ceiling. The floors were paved with slabs of stone, often covered with inscriptions. There appears to have been a great resemblance between this building and the palace built by Solomon at Jerusalem. The Jews probably borrowed their architecture from the Assyrians, although the Jewish palace must have been much smaller than that of the great Assyrian monarchs.

B. C. 900. The king who succeeded Sardanapalus was Shalmanu-bar. He probably reigned from B. C. 900 to B. C. 860 or 850, during the greater part of which time he seems to have been engaged in a series of warlike expeditions. A black obelisk, now in

the British Museum, records his deeds; and although only a very brief outline is given, yet the names of the countries which were invaded or subdued give an idea of the condition of Western Asia at this period, and are interesting, as throwing light upon facts alluded to in Scripture.

The kingdom of Hamath is amongst those which were made tributary by Shalmanu-bar, and we find from the Bible that Hamath was then a territory of great importance. Even as far back as the time of Joshua, and afterwards in the Book of Judges, "the entering into Hamath" (Joshua xiii. 5; Judges iii. 3) is specified as designating the district north of the Holy Land. And in the time of David it had risen into an important kingdom, for Toi, King of Hamath, is mentioned as sending his son Joram to express his gratitude to David for assistance rendered him in his wars. The country was conquered by Solomon, but it became independent again. Hamath appears to have been united with Damascus and some smaller neighbouring states in a league against Shalmanu-bar. Benhadad, King of Damascus, of whom such frequent mention is made in the First Book of Kings, was the head of this league. He was defeated by Shalmanu-bar in three great battles, and this ill success appears to have broken up the league, so that when Hazael (who, as we learn from the Bible, murdered Benhadad and seized his throne) was attacked in a similar manner by the Assyrian monarch, he was left without help. Shalmanu-bar, according to the account recorded on the obelisk, defeated Hazael, killed 16,000 of his fighting men, and captured more than 1100 chariots. It was about this period that the first direct connexion of which we have any record took place between the people of Israel and the Assyrians. An inscription on the black obelisk records a tribute of gold and silver, and articles manufactured

from gold, which was brought to Shalmanu-bar by Yahua, the son of Khumri, *i. e.*, Jehu, the son of Omri, a title equivalent to King of Samaria, the city which Omri built, and which was known to the Assyrians as Beth Omri. The title may have been intended by Jehu as a claim to actual descent from Omri, it being a characteristic of Eastern usurpers to identify themselves with the line of kings which, in reality, they dispossessed, and the Assyrians of course simply accepted the title which the King of Israel gave to himself. The submission shown by Jehu to Shalmanu-bar may probably have been the cause of the invasion of Israel by Hazael, King of Syria, the enemy of the Assyrians. For we read that in the reign of Jehu "the Lord began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel." (2 Kings x. 32). It was at this time that the Israelites were deprived of the entire country east of Jordan, the ancient possession of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, as far as "Aroer, by the river Arnon," which flows into the Dead Sea.

Shalmanu-bar, although thus engaged in wars, found both time and money for the embellishment of the cities of his empire; and many of the most interesting specimens of Assyrian art which have been discovered have been found in the great central palace at Nimroud, built by him.

His reign, however, was not one of domestic peace. His eldest son rebelled against him; and seven and twenty strong places espoused the cause of the pretender. The insurrection was with difficulty quelled by the exertions of Shamas-iva, Shalmanu-bar's second son, and the inheritor of his throne.

The Assyrian history becomes again confused after the reign of Shalmanu-bar. In the course of a century the names of only two kings have been discovered, B. C. 850. including Shamas-iva, the son and successor of

Shalmanu-bar, who has left records of his wars during four years, at the end of which the inscription on his obelisk ends abruptly.

About this period the prophet Jonah must have lived, as he is known to have delivered his predictions during the reign of Jeroboam II., King of Israel, in the latter half of the ninth century B. C.

B. C. 806. The son of Shamas-iva, Iva-lush III., is probably the Assyrian king, Pul, mentioned in the Second Book of Kings, where we are told that "Pul, the King of Assyria, came against the land of Israel, and Menahem, the King of Israel, gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him, to confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the King of Assyria. So the King of Assyria turned back and stayed not there in the land." (2 Kings xv. 19, 20.) This fact is corroborated by an inscription on a pavement slab from the upper chamber of the palace at Nimroud, which records the tribute given to Iva-lush by the surrounding nations, amongst whom mention is made of the country of Khumri, or Samaria. The wife of Iva-lush is named Semiramis. She reigned conjointly with her husband, who appears to have been in an especial way connected with Babylon. So far as can be gathered from the inscriptions, he appears to style himself "the King to whose son Asshur, the chief of the gods, has granted the kingdom of Babylon;" and he relates that on his return from a campaign in Syria, in which he had taken Damascus, he proceeded to Babylon, where he received the homage of the Chaldeans, and sacrificed to the gods of Babylon. It is possible that Semiramis was a Babylonish princess, for she is mentioned by Herodotus in a very brief notice of that

kingdom;—and Iva-lush may, in her right, have become sovereign of Babylon. But the history of this period is utterly obscure, and all which is known is that the first Assyrian dynasty of kings appears to have come to an end with Iva-lush, and that in its place a new dynasty was established.

There is a statue, now in the British Museum, dedicated by the artist to his lord, Iva-lush, and his lady, Sammuramit, or Semiramis.

With Iva-lush, or Pul, ends what is termed the early Assyrian empire.



CHAPTER III.

THE ASSYRIAN CONQUEST OF ISRAEL—B.C. 747—702.

B.C. 747. TIGLATH PILESER II., the successor of Iva-lush III., or Pul, was undoubtedly the founder of a new line of kings. There is a tradition that he was the gardener of Iva-lush, and gained his crown in some extraordinary way; but of this nothing is known with certainty. His inscriptions give signs of a revolution in the country, for in them he omits all mention of his ancestors, from which it may be safely concluded that he was a usurper, and that his ancestry was not royal. The annals of his reign extend over a space of seventeen years, and are only interesting as connected with the Bible.

The slabs on which his wars were inscribed were defaced by some of his descendants, and, being torn from their places, were used as materials for new buildings. Mention however is made in them of a Syrian campaign, in which he defeated Rezin, King of Damascus, and destroyed his city, and also received tribute from a king of Samaria, called in the inscription Menahem, but supposed to have been really Pekah, the King of Israel, whose name is always coupled in Scripture with that of Rezin.

Tiglath Pileser appears to have invaded the dominions of the kings of Israel twice. The first invasion is thus described in the Second Book of Kings (xv. 29):—"In the days of Pekah, King of Israel, came Tiglath Pileser,

King of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoh, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Napthali, and carried them captive to Assyria." The second invasion was undertaken at the request of Ahaz, King of Judah, who, finding himself hard pressed by the combination against him of Pekah and Rezin, sent this message to the Assyrian king: "I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the King of Syria, and out of the hand of the King of Israel, which rise up against me." (2 Kings xvi. 7.) The message, which involved a promise of subjection to Assyria, was accompanied by a rich present of silver and gold, taken from the treasures of the Temple, and of the king's palace.

This appeal to the Assyrian king, which was the beginning of the subjection of Judah, was singularly faithless and unworthy on the part of Ahaz; for we are told that when, on receiving the news of the confederacy between Israel and Syria, "the heart of the King of Judah was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind," the Prophet Isaiah had been especially commissioned to deliver to him a promise of Divine support. The king and the prophet met by the side of the canal which was supplied with water from one of the great reservoirs outside Jerusalem, and there Isaiah addressed Ahaz with consolatory words, bidding him not fear, but in quietness look forward to the utter destruction of his enemies, which, by the command of God, should speedily take place. The faith of Ahaz was too weak to receive the offered comfort, and God vouchsafed to him a yet stronger assurance. He was told to ask a sign which might convince him of the truth of the promise. But the Jewish king, probably in his own mind resting more strongly upon the projected alliance with the Assyrian monarch

than upon the word of the Almighty, refused. "I will not ask," he said, "neither will I tempt the LORD." (Isaiah vii. 12.) The anger of the prophet then burst forth, and in words which, although blended with a prophecy of the Messiah, must have thrilled the heart of Ahaz with terror, he predicted the misery which should in future days befall the king and his people. "The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah: even the King of Assyria." (Isaiah vii. 17.) For the present, however, destruction was to fall upon Syria and Israel, and the fulfilment of this prophecy was as speedy as the prediction itself was clear. Tiglath Pileser hearkened to the proposal of Ahaz, collected an army, and marching into Syria, B. C. 740, attacked and took Damascus, and slew Rezin. He then, it is supposed, proceeded to conquer Pekah, King of Israel, whose dominions he invaded on the north-east, where it bordered the kingdom of Damascus. All the district beyond the Jordan was overrun, and, as the tribe of Naphtali had before been taken captive, so now the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh were carried to Assyria. This fact is mentioned in the first Book of Chronicles (v. 26), where it is said: "He (Tiglath Pileser), carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day." After this, it is probable, that Pekah submitted, and consented to pay a fixed annual tribute. Tiglath Pileser rested at Damascus before the city was destroyed, and there Ahaz went to meet him. The alliance with Assyria must, by this time, have pressed heavily upon the King of Judah. In the words of Scripture, "Tiglath Pileser came unto

him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not." (2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 21.)

His chief enemies, Pekah and Rezin, were indeed subdued, but the exactions of the Assyrian king totally impoverished the country, and prevented Ahaz from keeping up an army to defend himself for the future. Fresh gifts appear to have been demanded of him after the meeting at Damascus; and the Temple itself was despoiled of its furniture and ornaments, in order to meet the demands of Tiglath Pileser; whilst, with the weak superstition which is characteristic of an unbeliever, Ahaz, who would not put faith in the promises of the One True God, turned for support to the gods of Syria, and even ordered an altar to be made for the temple at Jerusalem, after the pattern of one which he had admired at Damascus. "He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him, and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel." (2 Chron. xxviii. 23.) It is, most probably, this second invasion of Syria and Israel which is recorded on the Assyrian slabs. The other memorials of the reign of Tiglath Pileser have apparently perished.

B. C. 730. Little is known of Shalmaneser, who was the probable successor of Tiglath Pileser II., and that little is gained from Scripture, which informs us that he, like his predecessor, invaded Samaria, and exacted tribute from Hoshea, King of Israel. This tribute was, however, withheld after a time, for Hoshea, having allied himself with Sabeo, King of Egypt, felt himself in a position to revolt against the Assyrian monarch. His efforts were, however, vain. Shalmaneser laid siege to Samaria; the unfortunate King of Israel received no aid

from his Egyptian ally, and, after enduring the miseries of a siege for three years, Samaria fell. Whether the destruction of Samaria should be attributed to Shalmaneser, or to Sargon, his successor, is doubtful. We are expressly told in Scripture, that "The King of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years." (2 Kings xvii. 5.) And in the following verse it is said: "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the King of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria." (2 Kings xvii. 6.) And thus it would appear that Shalmaneser was the conqueror; but the assertion is not made expressly; the title, King of Assyria, belonging equally to him and his successor; whilst in the Assyrian inscriptions we find that Sargon, who, it is believed, ascended the throne after Shalmaneser, speaks of himself as the actual captor of the city.

Sargon seems to have been the founder of a new dynasty, and was, therefore, most probably a usurper. In his inscriptions, he calls the kings of Assyria his ancestors; but this would appear to be a mere figure of speech, as he carefully abstains from any mention of his father. He must have ascended the Assyrian throne about the year B. C. 721, and if, as is supposed, he was the conqueror of Samaria, the downfall of that city must have taken place in the first year of his reign. With Samaria, the whole kingdom of Israel fell likewise, and then it was that "the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants, the Prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. And the King of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel, and they possessed Samaria and dwelt in the cities thereof." (2 Kings xvii. 23, 24.)

The words "carried away," familiar as they are to our ears, suggest no idea of the sufferings which must have attended that great uprooting of a whole people, passionately attached as were the Israelites to their native land. But the Assyrian sculptures, which pourtray similar migrations of conquered races, bring them vividly before us. On the bas-reliefs found amidst the ruins of Kouyunjik, may still be seen the mournful procession of captives, fettered in pairs, and urged onwards by their guards, accompanied by women, partly on foot and partly, with their children, on mules, and in carts drawn by oxen. The men are represented as bearing skins, probably containing water and flour, to nourish them during a long and harassing march, whilst mothers hold water skins to quench the thirst of their little ones. In some instances the fathers are seen carrying their weary children on their backs. Thus must the inhabitants of Samaria have been driven through the Desert, to Halah and Habor, by the river of Gozan, and the cities of the Medes, because "they rejected the statutes of the LORD, and His covenant that he made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them." (2 Kings xvii. 15.)

The land to which the Israelites were taken was emphatically a heathen land, for the gods of the Assyrians were innumerable. Their names are inscribed upon tablets, and generally form part also of the names of the Assyrian kings; but it would be as useless as it is impossible accurately to describe their attributes. The chief god appears to have been Asshur, whose name constantly recurs in the inscriptions. The laws of the empire were the laws of Asshur, and the tribute payable from depen-

dent kingdoms was the tribute of Asshur. The usual titles of this god, as discovered from the tablets, were, "The great lord, The king of all the gods, The father of the gods," &c. He, no doubt, represents the son of Shem, who went forth from Shinar, and from whom the country of Assyria derived its name. Three other gods, whose names are constantly mentioned together on the inscriptions, appear to have been considered next in importance to Asshur. One of these, Anu, was, it seems, held in especial honour by Sargon, who places one of the four gates of his city under the joint guardianship of Anu and Astarte. The symbols of the protecting power of the deities appear to have been the enormous winged bulls, copies of which, as they stood before the Assyrian palaces and temples, are now to be seen at the Crystal Palace, near London. The captive Israelites may have recognised in these astonishing figures a resemblance to the figures of the cherubim in the Temple of Jerusalem, overshadowing the ark with their wings, and which, it is thought, were intended to symbolise the protecting guardianship of the Almighty. From the fact of these symbolic figures having been employed amongst heathen nations as well as the Jews, it has been supposed that they were an antediluvian tradition, handed down by those who, before the Flood, had seen the awful forms which stood at the eastern entrance of the garden of Eden, guarding the Tree of Life. Symbols, indeed, or what are supposed to be such, were commonly in use when the Assyrian worship was fully carried out. Many, as we now behold them, are very perplexing, especially the figures of priests with the heads of vultures, which are constantly occurring in the reign of Sargon and the kings who preceded and followed him. Whatever may have been their meaning, they were evidently in some way connected with religion.

Direct representations of idols are not common in the

Assyrian sculptures. The supreme deity is, it is supposed, symbolized on several of the early monuments by a circle, furnished with the expanded wings of a bird, and within which is placed a figure, human from the waist upwards, but merging downwards into the spread tail of a bird. This figure is crowned with a cap, appropriated to sacred objects. It is of a circular shape, and from it spring several pairs of horns, formed like those of a bull, and curving round to the front where they all meet. The circle which has been described, seems the only object to which the act of worship is represented. The king is generally standing or kneeling beneath the figure in the centre, his hands raised in sign of prayer or adoration. The same symbol is also seen above him when in battle, and at his triumphal return. It is never represented above any person of inferior rank, but appears to watch especially over the monarch who was probably typical of the nation. Another object common in scenes representing religious homage, is the Sacred Tree, which appears to have been originally intended for the twining stems of the honeysuckle, trained into a regular form, and studded with its flowers. Sometimes, however, other flowers, fruits, or fir-cones take the place of the original blossoms. The king is frequently represented as worshipping before the Sacred Tree. A basket of a peculiar form appears to have been one of the most indispensable utensils of the Assyrian worship. It must have been about five inches deep, and as many wide, with a wire handle passing from one side to the other. In the early sculptures it was generally either placed in the centre with a narrow border round it, or else embossed with figures. In the later sculptures it was made to represent plaited and interwoven work, but the material of the basket was most probably metal. The use to which it was applied has not been ascertained. Traces of fire wor-

ship are to be found in some of the later Assyrian monuments.

The little that is known of the details of the Assyrian religion has been chiefly derived from the sculptures, and amongst these some of the most valuable have been taken from a palace built by Sargon, at Khorsabad. In form and size it does not differ much from the other buildings of the Assyrian monarchs, but its ornaments are Egyptian. It is interesting to find, in confirmation of this circumstance, that reference is made by the Prophet Isaiah to a particular connexion between Egypt and Assyria existing at this period. In the twentieth chapter it is said, "In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod" (when Sargon, the King of Assyria, sent him), "and fought against Ashdod and took it, at the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saying, 'Go and loose thy sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot,' and he did so, walking naked and barefoot. And the Lord said, 'Like as my servant, Isaiah, hath walked naked and barefoot three years, for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia, so shall the King of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners and the Ethiopians captives.'" In the annals of Sargon, it is related that he made war in Southern Syria, and took Ashdod. Thus the one fact which Scripture distinctly assigns to the reign of this monarch is confirmed by the native records.

An advance in Assyrian art appears perceptible about the time of Sargon, and it may not improbably have been a consequence of the growing connection with Egypt. Enamelled bricks of brilliant colours, paintings on walls, cornices on the exterior of buildings, and the manufacture of transparent glass, belong to this age, and the latter is especially an Egyptian art. The wars of Sargon, as recorded on his monuments, include those in Israel and

Egypt, others in Babylonia, Upper Syria, Cappadocia, and Armenia, and in many of the lesser states of Asia. Tyre was taken by him, and Cyprus was invaded. Babylon was, at that time, under the rule of Merodach Baladan, the king mentioned in Scripture as having sent ambassadors to Hezekiah, King of Judah. It is supposed that Sargon, after invading Babylon, placed Merodach Baladan on the throne; but afterwards deposed and sent him into banishment.



CHAPTER IV.

SENNACHERIB AND ESAR-HADDON—B. C. 702—660.

B. C. 702. SENNACHERIB, the son of Sargon, must have come to the throne about the year B. C. 702, and have reigned about twenty-two years. He is the most celebrated of the Assyrian kings, and the language by which he is described in Scripture is fully corroborated by the discoveries made amongst the ruins of Nineveh. It was there that he fixed the seat of government, calling it the royal city. The town had indeed fallen into extreme decay, partly from the ravages of time, partly from the swellings of the Tigris, and required a complete restoration before it could be fitted to be the residence of the sovereign. Sennacherib appears to have begun the work of rebuilding as early as the second year of his reign. Collecting a host of prisoners from Chaldæa and Syria, Armenia and Cilicia, he used their forced labour for the improvement of the city. No less than 360,000 men were employed on the repairs of the great palace alone. Others were engaged in making bricks, others cut timber in Chaldæa and in Mount Hermon, and brought it to Nineveh. A certain number were builders; and thus within the space of two years the needful restorations were effected, and Nineveh was made, according to the expressions of Sennacherib himself, "as splendid as the sun." Two palaces were repaired, the inundations of the Tigris were prevented by an embankment of bricks, and the ancient aqueducts, which conveyed spring water to

the city from a considerable distance, were made capable of their original use. Not contented with these improvements, Sennacherib erected a new and more magnificent palace at Kouyunjik, which he decorated throughout with elaborate sculptures, in commemoration of his various expeditions. This building, which has been excavated in late years, is on a larger scale than any other Assyrian building. The portion of it which has been uncovered spreads over more than eight acres of ground. A sketch of the palace, taken from the ruins, and representing it as it might have been if restored to its original grandeur, depicts it as perhaps externally the most magnificent building which has ever been seen. Wide flights of steps, flanked by carved lions, lead to the elevated artificial platform on which the palace stands, and which must have been raised as a security against the inundations of the Tigris. The lower part of the building is covered with sculptures, representing sieges and triumphs; and the great archway in the centre is guarded by winged bulls. Above rise tier upon tier of columns, with carved capitals and sculptured cornices. The interior must have contained at least three spacious halls, one of them 150 feet by 125; and two long galleries, one of 200 feet, the other of 185 feet; and the chambers were innumerable, but what use was made of them it is impossible to determine, neither is it at all clear by what means the lower apartments were lighted. The arrangements, so far as we can discover them, appear to us cheerless and inconvenient, but in its size and grandeur Sennacherib's palace must have been a fit residence for the proud monarch who built and inhabited it, and whose career seems to have been one of unbounded success, until the hand of God was stretched out to punish him for his arrogance. His conquests began immediately on his accession, when he invaded Babylon, where Merodach Baladan had once

more succeeded in establishing himself upon the throne. A battle was fought, in which Sennacherib was completely successful, and the Babylonian prince barely escaped with his life. He fled, however, to the sea, and concealed himself from the Assyrian soldiers, who searched the shores and islands for him in vain. Sennacherib, in the meanwhile, entered and plundered Babylon, carrying off a vast treasure of gold, silver, vessels of gold and silver, precious stones, and men and women servants; he also destroyed a great number of Chaldean cities and villages, and then returned in triumph to Nineveh, after having committed the government of Babylon to an Assyrian named Belibus, the son of an officer of his court, and whom the king describes as "the son of him who was governor over the young men educated within his (Sennacherib's) palace."

War after war followed the invasion of Babylon. The powerful tribes on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, amongst whom are mentioned the Nabatheans and Hagarani, or Hagarenes (a name occurring in Scripture*), were brought into subjection, and of these wandering people Sennacherib declares that he carried away captive 203,000 men, women and children, with whom most probably he colonised newly built towns and villages. Many thousands of animals,—horses, camels, oxen and sheep,—are also mentioned as part of the booty. The mountain tribes in the north and east of Assyria were next subdued, the Median tribes were compelled to pay tribute, Syria was invaded, the Phœnician cities compelled to own their subjection, and the Kings of Edom and Ashdod induced to submit without a struggle. Ascalon, which ventured to resist, was attacked, the king and the whole royal family were seized and removed to Nineveh, and a fresh prince was placed upon the throne, whilst the towns which depended upon Ascalon were at the same

* Ps. lxxxiii. 6.

time taken and plundered. War with Egypt followed; and here the narrative of Scripture throws additional light upon the career of the great Assyrian monarch. Egypt was at that period under subjection to the King of Ethiopia, who was the true sovereign of the whole country, but it appears probable that certain of the native Egyptian princes were allowed to retain the kingly title. Some of these princes came up against Sennacherib, but were defeated by him at Lachish, a city which, together with Libnah, submitted to the conqueror. A bas-relief, found in Sennacherib's palace at Kouyunjik, gives a clear and vivid representation of the siege and conquest of Lachish. The city was evidently of great extent, and appears to have been defended by double walls, with battlements and towers. The country around it is portrayed as hilly and wooded, producing the fig and the vine. The whole power of Sennacherib seems to have been called forth to take this stronghold, for in no other sculptures are so many armed warriors seen drawn up in array. Archers form the first and second ranks, and behind them are spearmen and slingers. Large bodies of horsemen and charioteers form the reserve. Banks or mounds of stones, bricks, earth, and branches of trees are thrown up before the walls, against which battering rams have also been drawn up. The besiegers are represented as making a desperate defence, thronging the battlements, and showering arrows, javelins, stones and blazing torches upon the assailants. Part of the city is, however, taken, and a procession of captives is led before the king, who, gorgeously arrayed, receives them seated on his throne, which is placed upon an elevated platform, probably an artificial mound, in the hill country. The captives are undoubtedly Jews, for the Jewish physiognomy is strikingly indicated in the sculptures, but they must have been stripped of their ornaments.

Sennacherib then turned his arms against Hezekiah, King of Judah. A pretext for this appears in the fact, recorded in the Assyrian monuments, that the Edomites, a Philistine people, had expelled their king, a submissive vassal of Sennacherib, and had sent him bound to Hezekiah, who kept him prisoner at Jerusalem. Most probably Hezekiah exercised a certain authority over the Philistine towns, for we are told in the Second Book of Kings (xviii. 8) that in the beginning of his reign he smote the Philistines even unto Gaza; and if this were so, there would naturally be a contest for power between the two sovereigns, each claiming the allegiance of the Philistines.

The details of this expedition, so disastrous for Hezekiah, are thus given by Sennacherib, in an inscription found amongst the ruins of Nineveh, after a lapse of about two thousand five hundred years:—

“And because Hezekiah, King of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms and by the might of my power I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil 200,150 people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates so as to prevent escape. Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem, with thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty. All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my

government, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of submission to my power."

So also says the Scripture—"Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, did Sennacherib, King of Assyria, come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah, King of Judah, sent to the King of Assyria to Lachish, saying I have offended, return from me, that which thou puttest on me I will bear. And the King of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah, King of Judah, three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the Temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah, King of Judah, had overlaid, and gave it to the King of Assyria." (2 Kings xviii. 13—16.)

In these two records the tribute of gold given by Hezekiah to the Assyrian monarch is stated at the same amount, whilst there is some difference as to the silver; but when we examine the words of the Bible more closely, this fact is accounted for. Hezekiah gave to Sennacherib three hundred talents of silver, but he also gave all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasures of the king's house, thus making up doubtless the 800 talents mentioned in the inscription of Sennacherib. Besides this large tribute, Sennacherib states that he received various mineral products (probably coal, and crystal, and marbles), together with thrones, and beds, and rich furniture, the skins and horns of beasts, coral, ivory and amber.

This first expedition against Judah is the only one mentioned in the Assyrian annals, which are records of none but successful undertakings. When Sennacherib

again invaded Palestine his army was destined to meet with a ~~far~~ different fate; and, even had it been otherwise, it is doubtful whether any inscription would be found recording the event, as the annals of Sennacherib do not extend beyond eight years. In the meantime other objects engrossed the attention of the Assyrian king. Merodach Baladan, the deposed King of Babylon, still retained a powerful party in the country. He was supported by a Chaldean chief, against whom Sennacherib directed his efforts; and, having defeated him, the viceroy Belibus, whom Sennacherib had set up in his first year, was deposed, and Babylon placed under the authority of Sennacherib's eldest son Asshur-nadin.

The remaining records of Sennacherib's reign are of minor importance, and it is only from Scripture that we learn its inglorious termination.

The Assyrian king, as we are there told, invaded Syria a second time, though the precise date of the invasion is doubtful. His chief object of attack was, as before, the portion of Syria which bordered upon Egypt, and the two cities of Lachish and Libnah, which had been taken in the former wars, but had again fallen under the influence of Egypt. While engaged before Lachish, he seems to have heard of the defection of Hezekiah, who, contrary to the advice of the prophet Isaiah, had entered into an alliance with the King of Egypt, and had thus been guilty of rebellion against his liege lord. Sennacherib sent a detachment of his forces, under Rabshakeh, one of his chief generals, against Jerusalem.

Hezekiah, though he must have been well aware how inferior his power was to that of the Assyrian king, bravely prepared to withstand him. The efforts for defence which he made in expectation of the attack are thus described in Scripture: "Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced

cities, and thought to win them for himself. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the water of the fountains which were without the city, and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains and the brooks that ran through the midst of the land, saying, why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water? Also, he strengthened himself and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo, in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying, Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah." (2 Chron. xxxii. 1—8.)

When Rabshakeh, with other of Sennacherib's generals, drew nigh to Jerusalem, they took up their station outside the walls of the city, and sent messengers to summon Hezekiah to appear before them. To this degradation the King of Judah would not consent. Three of his chief nobles were, however, despatched to the Assyrian camp, to hear the terms proposed by Sennacherib; but there were, in fact, no terms, and the Jewish nobles had but to listen to a series of insolent taunts, especially on the subject of the want of cavalry, for which they had trusted to Egypt. The people, in the mean time, had crowded to the walls, watching and listening to the interview, and the Jewish ambassadors, fearing the effect

upon their minds, of the language used by the Assyrians, entreated Rabshakeh to speak in the Aramaean language, which was that of the regions north-east of Palestine; and which, as it resembled the Assyrian tongue, must have been understood by Sennacherib's general, whilst it was not intelligible to the common people amongst the Jews. Rabshakeh, however, scoffed at the request, and, turning to the people, addressed them in a Hebrew speech, and endeavoured to shake their allegiance to Hezekiah, by setting before them the tremendous power of the monarch whom he was preparing to oppose. "Whereon do ye trust," he exclaimed, "that ye abide in the siege at Jerusalem? Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The Lord our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it? Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands anyway able to deliver their lands out of mine hand? Who was there among all the gods of those nations, that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand? Now, therefore, let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner; neither yet believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers; how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand? And his servants spake yet more against the Lord God, and against his servant Hezekiah." (2 Chron. xxxii. 10—16.)

The Jewish nobles returned to their master, to lay before him the alternative, either of abject submission, or

deadly defiance; and Rabshakeh, still further bent upon intimidating the people, sent letters amongst them, warning them that, "as the gods of the nations of other lands had not delivered their people out of Sennacherib's hand, so should not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people." Thus he "spoke against the God of Jerusalem as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of man. And for this cause, Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amos, prayed and cried to heaven." (2 Chron. xxxii. 17—20.)

The promise sent in answer to this prayer was speedily fulfilled. Rabshakeh, having completed his embassy, returned to his master, but found that during his absence, some important changes had taken place. The siege of Lachish had, as it would seem, been raised, and Sennacherib had moved to Libnah. Here the intelligence reached him that Tirhakah, King of Ethiopia, had collected an army, and was on his way to assist the Egyptians, against whom the Assyrian attack was in reality directed. Deeming it wise to direct his full force against the allies, Sennacherib contented himself with sending a threatening letter to Hezekiah, warning him that the danger was only delayed; and pressed forward to Egypt. Hezekiah received the letter, and, carrying it to the Temple, spread it before the Lord, with a fervent petition for help; and the promise of safety was again repeated, with the additional assurance that Sennacherib should not even shoot an arrow against the city, nor cast a bank against it. Hezekiah rested in peace, trusting in the word of his God, and Sennacherib pursued what, to human eyes, must have appeared a course of assured conquest. But his humiliation was near at hand. On the borders of Egypt, he appears to have been met by an Egyptian prince, or Satrap, who held his court at Memphis, while the kings of the Ethiopian dynasty were reigning at Thebes; and, probably, it was as the two

armies lay encamped opposite to one another, that the wonderful discomfiture of his forces took place. The Angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold! they were all dead corpses. (2 Kings xix. 35.) Sennacherib, with the remnant of his army, fled, and the Egyptians, regarding the miraculous destruction as the work of their own gods, took the credit of it to themselves and commemorated it after their own fashion.*

Sennacherib appears to have outlived this catastrophe several years. "He departed," we are told, "and went and returned and dwelt at Nineveh." (2 Kings xviii. 36.) The word *dwelt* implies some considerable length of residence; and, although the Book of Tobit says that he was murdered fifty-five days after his return from Syria, the statement cannot be considered to possess any authority. During this latter period of his reign, he must have carried on many of the wars mentioned in his inscriptions, besides occupying himself with the enlargement and embellishment of his palace at Nineveh. A violent death put sudden end to all his projects; and a fact, singular in itself, and a very remarkable probable confirmation of this event, is, that the sculptures in Sennacherib's palace at Kouyunjik are left unfinished. The majestic human-headed bulls, which formed one of the gateways, and the colossal winged figures behind them, are only outlined. They stand, it has been said, as if the sculptors had been interrupted by some public calamity, and had left their work incomplete. The feathers in one of the wings of the bull are marked out, but the sculptor had been interrupted after finishing one row, and prevented from completing another. The entrance to the palace, formed by these colossal bulls, is paved with large slabs of limestone, which still bear the marks of chariot wheels. Mr. Layard, who

* See History of Egypt, p. 95.

first discovered the remains of this palace, when superintending the excavations at Kouyunjik, says that it would be difficult to describe the effect produced, or the reflections suggested, by these solemn and majestic figures (the winged bulls) dimly visible amidst the gloom, when, after winding through the dark, under-ground passages, he suddenly came into their presence. Between them Sennacherib, and his hosts, had gone forth, in all their might and glory, to the conquest of distant lands, and had returned rich with spoil and captives, amongst whom may have been the handmaidens, and wealth of Israel. Through them, too, the Assyrian monarch had entered his capital in shame, after his last and fatal defeat. The lofty walls, now but long lines of low, wave-like mounds, then stretched far to the right and left, a basement of stone supporting a curtain of solid brick masonry, crowned with battlements, and studded with frowning towers;* and then, also, a high tower must have risen above the gateway, for this was the great northern access to one portion of the city. But a comment upon the delusive grandeur of Sennacherib's reign, more impressive than any detailed account, is to be found in the short narrative of Scripture, which tells us, that "as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch, his god, Adramelech and Sharezer, his sons, smote him with the sword, and they escaped into the land of Armenia, and Esar-haddon, his son, reigned in his stead." (2 Kings xix. 37.) The escape of the murderers into Armenia, is in remarkable harmony with what is known of the condition of that country at the time, for, in the sculptured records of the period, it appears as an independent state, generally hostile to the Assyrian monarchs. The Armenian traditions also distinctly name the reception of the two refugees, and mention the tract of land respectively assigned to them.

* Layard's *Ninereh and Babylon*, p. 121.

Esar-haddon was, most probably Sennacherib's second son. The eldest, Asshur-nadin, the Viceroy of Babylon, is supposed to have died before his father, or to have been involved in his destruction. Esar-haddon appears to have had no difficulty in establishing himself on the throne after his father's murder. Like his father and his grandfather, he was both a great conqueror and a founder of magnificent edifices. As a proof of his power, he declares in the inscriptions that he assembled at Nineveh twenty-two kings of the land of Syria and of the sea-coast, and passed them in review before him. Some of his conquests are said to have been in a land "of which the kings, his fathers, had never heard the name;" and other wars are recorded with tribes "who, from days of old, had never obeyed any of the kings his ancestors." Babylon was now completely subdued, and Esar-haddon reigned there, it appears, without a viceroy. A son of Merodach Baladan, indeed, contended with him, but paid for his rebellion with his life. Another son, who was a refugee at the court of Esar-haddon, was, however, treated with such lenity, that a territory on the shores of the Persian Gulf, which had once belonged to his rebellious brother, was bestowed upon him. Esar-haddon repaired temples and built a palace at Babylon, bricks from which, bearing his name, have been found amongst the ruins in the neighbourhood.

A Babylonian tablet has also been found, by which it appears that Esar-haddon was the acknowledged king of that country. It is probable that he held his court, sometimes at the Assyrian, sometimes at the Babylonian capital, and hence it happened that when his generals, after invading Judah, carried King Manasseh away captive from Jerusalem, they conducted him to Babylon, where he remained prisoner until released by the clemency of Esar-haddon, directed by the Providence of God. These events are thus narrated in the Second Book of Chronicles:

"Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the King of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD, his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him, and He was entreated of him and heard his supplication, and brought him to Jerusalem unto his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD He was God." (xxxiii. 11, 12, 13.) The name of the Assyrian king is not mentioned in Scripture, but that Esar-haddon and Manasseh were contemporaries is known from the fact that Esar-haddon mentions Manasseh, among the kings who sent him workmen for his great buildings. It is singular and very interesting to see how these ancient sculptures throw light upon what is otherwise the perplexing statement of Scripture with regard to Manasseh's captivity, namely, that he was taken prisoner by the Assyrians, but carried to Babylon.

The edifices erected by Esar-haddon appear to have equalled, if not exceeded in magnificence, those of any former Assyrian king. In one inscription the king states, that in Assyria and Mesopotamia he built no fewer than thirty temples, "shining with silver and gold, as splendid as the sun." And besides repairing various palaces erected by former kings, he built at least three new ones for his own use, or that of his son. One of these palaces is now known as the South West Palace, at Nimroud. The materials were taken from the palaces of the former monarchs who had reigned at that place, and for whom, as they did not belong to his own family, Esar-haddon appears to have entertained but little respect. The South West Palace consisted of an enormous hall, with a certain number of chambers, probably sleeping apartments, on each side. This hall, which was 220 feet long, and 100 broad, was approached through an ante-chamber with two doorways,

and, at the northern end, it opened by a gateway of winged bulls, on a terrace which overlooked the grand approach and the other principal palaces; at the opposite end there was a triple portal, guarded by three pairs of colossal sphinxes and commanding the open country, and the Tigris winding through the plain. The hall must have been a magnificent feature in this palace, which, in its plan, appears to have more closely resembled that built by Solomon at Jerusalem than any other of the buildings yet discovered at Nineveh. Another of Esar-haddon's palaces was, as he himself boasts, a building such as the kings, his fathers, who went before him had never made. When completed, he is said to have called it "the palace of the pleasures of all the year." It is described as supported on wooden columns, roofed with cedar, and adorned with sculptures in stone and marble, and abundant images in silver, ivory and bronze, many of which were brought from a distance. Some of these were the idols of the conquered countries, and others images of the Assyrian gods. Its gates were ornamented with the usual mystical bulls, and its extent was so great that horses and other animals were not only kept, but even bred, within its walls.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOWNFALL OF THE SECOND ASSYRIAN EMPIRE—
B. C. 600—625.

THE decay of the Assyrian empire appears to have commenced with the son of Esar-haddon, who is n. c. 600 called **Asshur-bani-pal II.**, or **Sardanapalus**. This prince gave but little attention to war. Hunting seems to have been his passion; at least if we may judge from the sculptured slabs found in his palace at Nineveh, and which represent him as engaged in the pursuit and destruction of wild animals. The arts must have flourished under his patronage, for there is a manifest improvement in the sculptures of his reign, especially in those which delineate animals, and which are far more true to nature than the efforts of an earlier period. But the power of Assyria was essentially military, and when the vigour of the king declined, the fall of the empire was a natural consequence. The next monarch, whose name as given by the Assyrian inscriptions is somewhat doubtful, must have been very inferior to his predecessor, for a palace, the chief monument of his reign, indicates in a very marked way the diminution in his time of Assyrian wealth and magnificence. It had no great hall or gallery, and no sculptured slabs; and consists merely of rooms of small proportions, panelled by plain slabs of common limestone, roughly hewn, and not more than three and a half feet high. The upper part of the walls above the panelling was simply plastered. If the Assyrian

king was reduced to live in this building, we cannot but suppose that the superb palaces of his ancestors must have fallen into ruin. It seems probable that, through the invasions of powerful neighbours, especially the Medes, who were then growing into prominence, Assyria had been greatly weakened, her cities desolated, and her palaces dismantled or destroyed. These disasters may the more easily be accounted for if we consider the nature of the power possessed by the Assyrian monarchs. It was not a firm sovereignty over a united people, but a dominion over various kingdoms, which was, therefore, continually enlarging or contracting. The successive monarchs appear to have carried on wars with almost the same people, for, though professedly under the Assyrian dominion, the subject states were perpetually striving to rebel. They were, indeed, in no way engrafted into the kingdom of Assyria. They kept their old laws, their old religion, and their line of kings. All that was required of the conquered monarchs was to go through certain acts of submission, such as that of attending at the court of their suzerain when summoned, saluting him there as a superior, paying him tribute, and, giving him presents. This was the kind of dominion exercised by Solomon, of whom it is said, "Solomon reigned over *all the kingdoms* from the River (Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents and served Solomon all the days of his life." (1 Kings iv. 21.) Besides this acknowledgment of inferiority, the subject kings were required to allow their lord free passage through their dominions, and to oppose any attempt at invasion, by way of their country, on the part of his enemies. Josiah, King of Judah, appears to have perished in the performance of this duty, for we are told, "In his days Pharaoh-nechoh, King of Egypt, went up against the King of Assyria to the River Euphrates: and King Josiah went against him

and he slew him at Megiddo when he had seen him." (2 Kings xxiii. 29.) It is evident that such a government must have been liable to constant disorder and disunion. Whilst an active and energetic king was the supreme lord, there must have been a great appearance of strength and greatness in his dominions. The riches of other nations were at his disposal, skilful workmen were lent for the service of the court, and assisted in building temples and palaces; and treasures from various states were collected to form materials for beautifying the great capital. But when a sovereign of inferior ability ascended the throne, or whenever any disastrous circumstance, such as a foreign attack or a domestic conspiracy, occurred, this professed subjection ceased,—each separate kingdom took the opportunity to assert its independence, tribute ceased to be paid, and with the cessation of tribute a check was at once placed upon the supreme power. War necessarily followed; the rebel countries were again overrun and subdued, and after a time the dominant empire was restored to its former authority. But the arts of peace and the improvement of the people could make but little progress under such a system. Fear of rebellion compelled the adoption of a severe system of government. In order to preserve the central power, the subject states were treated with the utmost cruelty if they attempted to shake off the yoke imposed upon them. Their lands were wasted, their towns pillaged and burnt, the tribute was increased, the rebel king was deposed, hundreds were beheaded or impaled, and hundreds of thousands carried away captive by the conqueror, and either employed in servile labour at the capital or settled as colonists in a distant province. Chaldeans were transported into Armenia, Jews and Israelites into Assyria and Media, Babylonians and other nations into Palestine. By this means feelings of patriotism and independence were weakened,

and the spirit of the various races subdued. But such treatment, though it might procure security for a time, was, as it has been shown, in the end fatal to the enslaver, who, when foreign-invasion came, found that his subject kingdoms, being completely alienated, had neither the will nor the power to give him any effectual aid.

It can scarcely be a subject of surprise, that, with a government so constituted, the downfall of Assyria was as rapid as its power has been great. Saracus was the last King of Assyria, but it does not appear whether this name belongs to the grandson of Esar-haddon, whose inscriptions have not been clearly decyphered, or to his successor. All that can be asserted distinctly is that the destruction of Nineveh took place during his reign. The Medes, under their king, Cyaxares, had at this period attained great power; and, assisted by the Susianians and other tribes from the sea-coast, they invaded Assyria. In this emergency Saracus, confiding in his general Nabopolassar, appointed him governor of Babylon, and sent him to act against the Susianians, whilst he himself remained at Nineveh to meet the greater danger threatened by Cyaxares. Nabopolassar, however, proved faithless, and having received his appointment, determined to make use of it for his own ends. He entered into negotiations with Cyaxares, and offered to send or lead a body of troops to act against the Assyrian king if Cyaxares would consent to the marriage of his daughter, the Median princess, Amyitis, with Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar. These terms were accepted, and Nineveh was besieged by the joint forces of Cyaxares and the Babylonian governor. Saracus, thus assailed by enemies from without and traitors from within, defended his capital for a time; but at last, despairing of success, he withdrew to his palace,

and firing it with his own hand, perished, with all belonging to him, in the conflagration.

The destruction of Nineveh is described by the Greek writer Ctesias; and, although but little credit can in general be given to his statements, yet in this instance there are proofs of his correctness in some particulars. According to him, the siege lasted two years, and was brought to a successful issue chiefly in consequence of an extraordinary rise of the Tigris, which swept away a portion of the city wall, and so gave admittance to the enemy. Upon this the Assyrian monarch, considering further resistance to be vain, set fire to his palace, and the conqueror completed the ruin of the once magnificent capital by razing the walls and delivering the whole city to the flames. It is probable that at the same time the other royal cities, or at least their palaces, were destroyed in like manner.

The prophecy of Nahum confirms for the most part the account here given. When describing the calamities that are about to fall upon Nineveh, the prophet thus speaks:—"The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways. They shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings. He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defence shall be prepared. The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." (ii. 4, 5, 6.)

"All thy strongholds shall be like fig trees with the first ripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater. Behold, thy people in the midst of

these are women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars. Draw thee water for the siege, fortify thy strongholds: go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brick-kiln. There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the canker-worm." (iii. 12, 13, 14, 15.)

The recent excavations have especially attested the fulfilment of prophecy in one respect, by shewing that fire was a chief agent in the destruction of the city. Calcined alabaster, masses of charred wood and charcoal, and colossal statues, split through with the heat, are met with in all parts of the Ninevite mounds.

The fall of the great empire, though no doubt the result of long previous weakness, appears to us almost instantaneous. In the words of Nahum, "Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are. Thy shepherds slumber, O King of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust, the people is scattered upon the mountains and no man gathereth them. There is no healing of thy bruise, thy wound is grievous, all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" (Nahum iii. 17, 18, 19.)

Grievous indeed was the wound, for the fallen nation was never again able to raise itself. The strength of the race was exhausted, and the extent of Nineveh's degradation in succeeding ages is thus described in the prophecy of Zephaniah, "He will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation and dry like a wilderness. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels

of it; their voice shall sing in the windows, desolation shall be in the thresholds; for he shall uncover the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart: I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand."

The cedar work mentioned in the prophecy has been brought to light by recent discoveries. Mr. Layard says that when he was standing one day on a mound at Nimroud, some of his Arab workmen, who were excavating a small temple, dug out a cedar beam, and made with it a fire to warm themselves. The sweet smell reached him, though he was standing at a distance, for after the lapse of three thousand years the wood had retained its original fragrance.

More striking even than the words of Zephaniah are those of the prophet Ezekiel:—"Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was

like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him. Therefore thus saith the LORD God; because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs; and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit." (Ezek. xxxi. 3-14.)

CHAPTER VI.

CIVILIZATION OF THE ASSYRIANS.

THE independent Assyrian empire is considered to have lasted about five centuries from Tiglath Pileser I., n. c. 1110, to Asshur-bani-pal II., n. c. 640. After that time its decline appears to have been so rapid that it can scarcely be looked upon as an empire. What amount of civilisation had been attained by the Assyrians during this period it is difficult to determine, for the sculptures relate chiefly to war, and do not, like those of Egypt, describe the domestic life of the people. So far as we can discover, the Assyrians must have been a patient, laborious race, caring more for what was useful than what was ornamental. Their imitations are always very exact, and even when they appear most strange, are intended to give the spectator true ideas. For instance, the colossal bulls and lions have five legs, but this is in order that they may be seen from every point of view with four. The ladders are placed edgewise against the walls of besieged towns, but it is to show that they are ladders, and not mere poles. Walls of cities are made small, but it is to bring them within the picture, which would otherwise be a less complete representation of the actual fact. As works of art, the Assyrian sculptures surpass the Egyptian, though they fall far short of the beautiful productions of the Greeks.

In speaking of the arts known to the Assyrians, it must however be remembered that the representations given in the sculptures are not such as would be under-

stood at one glance. The laws of perspective were not studied by them; proportion was not preserved, and foreshortening was not resorted to, whilst the reluctance to cover any portion of a prominent personage by a trifling implement sometimes led to ludicrous absurdities. Thus, in a sculptured lion-hunt, now in the British Museum, the arrow which the king is discharging seems to proceed from the farther side of his person, though the hand which draws it is on the near side. The cause appears to have been the idea that what was subordinate should be made to yield to what was more important. The human body, being of more consequence than the bow-string or arrow, was drawn over it, but the right hand was of still greater importance, and therefore took precedence of both.

The Assyrians had also certain fixed modes of representing what they saw, which had but a doubtful resemblance to the reality. The human face was almost always drawn in profile, but the eye was depicted nearly as it would be if viewed in front. Water was expressed by a number of parallel lines, running for a short distance, and then curling round in a scroll, to represent the whirls and eddies of a river; and when the sea was intended, these eddies were depicted as flowing in all directions. Hills and mountains were expressed by a regular series of undulating lines. In animals, the rough hair was described by a number of pointed locks, and the loose hair on the body of a lion by an arrangement of small curls or ringlets, set as close as possible. The principal animals, such as the horse, the bull, and the lion, were drawn with much skill; but smaller and less known animals were depicted very roughly, and with only a very distant resemblance to nature.

The Assyrian ornaments and utensils indicate a refined taste and a considerable acquaintance with the method of

working metals, and the arts of inlaying and enamelling, and of cutting gems, whilst some of their inventions were such as till lately were fully believed to be quite modern. The most remarkable is the lens discovered at Nimroud, and which it has been clearly proved was used as a magnifying glass. Long indeed before the discovery of the Nimroud lens it was believed that the Assyrians used magnifying glasses, from the fact that the inscriptions were so minute that they could not possibly be read—and could not therefore have been formed—without them. It would thus appear that, notwithstanding their rude government, their barbarity in war, and the debasing nature of their religion, the Assyrians were, towards the close of their empire, very nearly on a par with ourselves in regard to the arts and comforts of life, thus shewing that the greatest outward prosperity may co-exist with the decline, and even be a herald of the downfall of a kingdom.

With regard to the habits and manners of the Assyrians, we can gain but little idea from the sculptures, as they chiefly represent the customs of the court. The ordinary dress of the Assyrian men was a plain robe, the margin of which was embroidered and edged with a fringe. The width of the embroidery appears to have borne some proportion to the rank of the wearer. Out of doors, or when engaged in hunting, or in battle, the early Assyrian kings and nobles often wore a close fitting jacket, or spencer, from the hinder part of which descended a square piece of cloth, in general elaborately embroidered, and furnished at each corner with two long cords, terminating in tassels. The royal head dress was a kind of mitre, or conical cap, with a little peak rising from the centre of the crown; a richly ornamented band generally surrounded the lower part of the cap, and two long ribbons hung down the back. High officers of the state wore diadems, closely resembling the lower part of the royal mitre. Warriors and hunters are

often represented bare-headed, but the kings never. The hair of the head and beard was evidently cherished with great care. The former descended to the shoulders, in a large mass, carefully curled at the tip into four or five rows of close set ringlets, and the ribbons of the diadem, or mitre, were formed into a loop to support it on each side. The beard was disposed in small curls all over the face and chin; but below, it was arranged into a square form, composed of spiral rouleaux, with small curls at intervals. The Assyrians stained their eyelids, eyelashes and eyebrows, with black, to render their eyes more brilliant. In the shoes, or sandals, worn by them, the protection of the heel, and not that of the toe, was the object desired. There was no front to the shoe, but the sole and heel were fastened to the foot by lacings of coloured leather, and also by a stout ring, through which the great toe was passed; this toe ring was sometimes ornamented.

Armlets and bracelets were much worn; earrings, also, were very common. Necklaces are seen in the early sculptures, but not in those of a later date.

In Assyria, as in most of the ancient despotic empires, every interest was centered in the sovereign, who was looked upon almost as a god. He does not seem to have exercised any priestly office, but the priests were quite subordinate to him. In the inscriptions, the king says of himself, "I raised altars to the great gods." "I dedicated a temple to the god Rimmon." "I appointed priests in that land, to pay adoration to Assurac, the great and powerful god, and to preside over the national worship:" thus showing how completely he was the head of the system of religion. Following the usual Eastern customs, he appears to have kept himself quite aloof from his subjects. A magnificent throne of richly wrought metal, and beautifully carved ivory, has been found at Nineveh,

but the throne seems to have been separated from the state apartments by means of a large curtain. The rings by which this curtain was drawn, and undrawn, have been preserved; although everything indicates that the palace was destroyed by fire, the throne itself having been, it is said, partially fused by the heat. The golden sceptre mentioned in the Book of Esther, as used by the king of Persia, was also an ensign of royalty in Assyria. It appears to have been a wand of the precious metal, commonly held in the right hand, with one end resting on the ground, and that, whether the king was sitting or walking. One of the Ninevite alabasters in the British Museum, represents the monarch returning to his palace after hunting, and gives us some idea of the etiquette of the court. It appears that the king, on reaching the palace, and alighting from his chariot, was met by the great officers of the royal household. First came the cup-bearer, who presented his master with a prepared beverage, probably either weak and sweet wine, or a drink resembling the sherbet of the present day, a species of lemonade flavoured with the juices of other fruits. Having given the cup into the king's hands, the cup-bearer waved over his sovereign's head the fly-whisk, either to disperse the insects, which in such hot climates collect quickly around any sweetened beverage, or else to answer the same purpose as a fan with us. These fly-whisks consisted commonly of slender filaments of wood, or delicate feathers, set in a carved handle. When the king had satisfied his thirst, the cup-bearer, without intermitting the waving of the fly-whisk, presented to him the napkin, a cloth very narrow, but of great length, richly embroidered and fringed at each end. It was carried over the left shoulder, hanging down before and behind nearly to the ground. The vizier, or prime minister, followed the cup-bearer. He was dressed almost as magnificently as the

sovereign himself, but his folded hands, and attitude of passive reverence, were an evidence of his entire subjection. The officer behind him, dressed in a long plain robe, slightly fringed, and wearing around his head a fillet, ornamented in front with a large button, probably a gem, appears to have been the chief of the seraglio, the guardian of the women. He also received his lord with folded hands, the palms crossed one upon the other in front of the breast. After this officer came the minstrels, whose duty it was to welcome their master with the psaltery and harp, and probably to sing, to music of their own composing, songs, praising his valour, majesty, or clemency. These minstrels carried their ten-stringed harps suspended in front of their breasts, by a belt around the neck. These are all the officers and attendants represented as welcoming the king back to his palace. Other persons, indeed, are present, but they appear to have accompanied the monarch, and to have returned with him.

Of all these officers, the fly-flapper seems to have been the most indispensable. And almost equally necessary was the parasol-bearer, who always attended the king in his chariot. An Assyrian parasol very much resembled those used by ladies in modern times, except that it was much larger, and more heavy, requiring the support of both hands. Even when the monarch sat on his throne, within his royal halls, it was beneath the shade of a parasol, a circumstance which strengthens the conjecture that the Assyrian palaces were, at least in the centre, open to the sky.

The Assyrian court was evidently a scene of studied politeness. As it is a breach of Eastern etiquette, at this day, to grasp with the hand anything presented to a superior, if it can possibly be carried otherwise, so it was in the ancient court of Nineveh. Objects which could lie in the open palm of the hand, appear to have been

always so carried; and if the grasp of the fingers was needed, it was exercised with as little pressure as possible, the fingers remaining straight, and the object being held against them by the thumb.

The Assyrian kings never travelled, even when they undertook warlike expeditions, without every convenience and aid to luxury to which they were accustomed at home. An exemplification of this fact is to be seen in the sculptures discovered in the palace of Salmuneser at Khorsabad, which represent the king as about to set out on some journey. Some of his officers carry drinking cups, others bear on their shoulders his pleasure chair, a comfortable high-backed arm chair, elaborately carved, placed on a pair of low wheels, and, it is supposed, intended to be drawn by men. His massive throne, or stationary chair, his dressing table, his royal chariot, are all carried in like manner, together with carved seats and washing bowls. This custom of travelling with materials for luxury, which was not peculiar to the Assyrian, but common to all Asiatic nations, is illustrated by the account given in the First Book of Kings of the treasures found in the Syrian camp by the four lepers who entered it after the sudden flight of the army. We read: "And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver and gold and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it." And so again: "They went after them unto Jordan; and lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste." (2 Kings vii. 8. 15.)

The Assyrian palace, the magnificent residence of monarchs so powerful and luxurious, has already been partially described. The great collection of buildings which constituted the royal residence was built on a flat

platform of sun-dried bricks, eight, ten, or even twenty yards in height above the surrounding plain, and faced with slabs of alabaster. Access to the platform was obtained by one or more flights of steps, and at the summit was the throne-room, in which the sovereign sat on state occasions, while his troops, or crowds of his subjects moved up and down before him in procession, all doing homage as they passed. The throne-room is supposed to have been identical with what is called in Scripture the Gate, by which is meant, not a gateway or entrance as we understand the word, but a justice hall, or place of assembly, at the entrance or gate of the palace. It was most probably in such a throne-room or gate that Mordecai sat when he overheard the plots of the conspirators, and in which Haman was stationed when Mordecai refused to bow before him, and into which Mordecai himself could not enter while clothed in sackcloth. It was the seat of judgment also, where one of the principal officers of the palace generally was placed to transact business, hear causes, &c. Beyond the throne-room other flights of stairs appear to have conducted the visitor to a higher level, on which stood the various erections forming the palace strictly so called, and which consisted of suites of apartments surrounding quadrangular courts, and appropriated to distinct purposes. Whatever may have been the discomfort of these buildings with regard to domestic arrangements, there can be no doubt that the size of the state apartments, and the manner in which they were ornamented, rendered their appearance most imposing. The stranger who, for the first time, entered the abode of the Assyrian kings, was ushered in through a portal guarded by colossal lions or bulls of white alabaster. In the front hall, into which light was admitted by square openings in the ceiling, he found himself surrounded by the sculptured records of the empire.

Battles, sieges, triumphs in war and in the chase, together with religious ceremonies, were portrayed on the walls, sculptured in alabaster, and painted in gorgeous colours. Under each picture were engraved, in characters filled up with bright copper, inscriptions describing the scene represented. Coloured borders of elegant design enclosed other representations of the chief acts of the sovereign,—his reception of his prisoners, his alliances with neighbouring states, &c. At the upper end of the hall was the colossal figure of the king adoring the supreme deity, or engaged in some religious act. Warriors and priests attended him, their robes, like those of the monarch, being adorned with groups of figures and flowers, painted in with brilliant colours. The stranger trod upon alabaster slabs, each bearing an inscription recording the title, genealogy, and achievements of the king. From this hall opened several doorways, formed by gigantic winged lions or bulls, or by the figures of guardian deities. These led into the apartments, which again gave entrance into more distant halls, all elaborately sculptured and brilliantly painted. The ceilings of these apartments were inlaid with ivory, and painted, and the beams were of cedar or some wood equally rare.

It seems most probable that the Assyrian palaces were connected with religious worship, and that some portion of the building was set apart as a temple. In a palace at Khorsabad an apartment has been discovered, forty feet long and thirty-three feet wide, containing a large square block near the centre of the back wall, which seems to have been intended to support an altar. The few fragments of sculpture which remain display acts of religious service. The pavement of the apartment, and even the platform on which it stood, were formed of black stone, and these circumstances combined render it probable that

this was a chapel dedicated to Assur or Assarne. It may have been a portion of a temple, or a chapel devoted to the monarch's private worship. The chambers devoted to the king's wives were, there is reason to believe, as strictly secluded from public view as in all oriental courts. The condition of women among the Assyrians was one of rigid privacy. Scarcely any example has yet occurred of the representation of an Assyrian woman in the sculptures of the country. It is exceedingly likely that extensive gardens occupied some part of the platforms on which the palaces were built, the neighbouring city of Babylon and the Persian palaces, which greatly resembled the Assyrian, having been celebrated for them; but all traces have of course disappeared.

The only light we possess about the dwellings of the Assyrian people is derived from the representations of their intrenched camps. As the camp was a kind of temporary city, its erections would probably resemble those of the regular town. They appear to have contained a large house of peculiar form, standing by itself, and appropriated to the kings, and other houses similar in shape but smaller in size, and, finally, conical tents or huts, the dwellings of the common soldiers or attendants. The houses appear to have been built, like the houses of the East at the present day, around a court, the apartments forming one side or more of the court according to the rank of the owner. The sides not formed by rooms would consist, as they do now, of thick walls of brick, burnt or sun-dried, or else of mud. A single door gave admission into the house, but the windows looked into the court;—there were none on the outside, so that the streets must have had a very gloomy appearance. The apartments on one side of the court were always much higher than those of the other. Both in palaces and private houses there appear to have been in the upper

stories open galleries fronting the court, supported by pillars and furnished with curtains.

The furniture depicted exhibits considerable variety of form; and from other sources we know that the Assyrians had couches and beds with pillars and canopies, and curtains of magnificent tapestry. The dining tables were massive, whilst others more nearly resembled our own four-legged tables. A favourite and more elegant kind of table was similar to our camp stools, the supports crossing upon a pivot, and intended to fold up. The feet of these tables were generally carved into the form of gazelles' hoofs.

Stools, frequently with cushions laid upon them, were constantly used for sitting, chairs being never represented in the sculptures except as the seats of kings or gods. A seat of state used at table was a stool large enough to hold two persons sitting side by side. It appears upon inquiry that the ancient orientals more nearly agreed with the people of Western Europe in the customs of sitting and reposing than with the Eastern nations of the present day. They sat, as we do, with the legs perpendicular, neither cross-legged nor squatted upon their heels. In the representation of a banquet, in King Shalmaneser's palace, the double stools already mentioned are used. Two guests are seated facing two others, with a table covered with a cloth, between the four; but the height of the seats, and the absence of footstools, and of any rest for the back, would have rendered the position uncomfortable to our feelings. The arrangement for the whole of the banquet is made in a similar way, the tables being so placed that the attendants could pass to and fro in lanes between the tables.

The mode of preparing the wine at Assyrian banquets, and of presenting it to the guests, affords a very interesting illustration of the numerous passages in Scripture

which speak of *wined* wine. The process of preparation is represented in the sculptures with curious precision. A man is standing apart at a figure X table, on which he is grinding some substance, while on the table before him stands one of those bottle-necked gourds in which drugs, such as aloes, &c., are generally sent at this day from Arabia. He, doubtless, is grinding down the powerful ingredients to be mixed with the wine. In another place, not far off, stands a large vase or bath, of elegant form, capable of containing many gallons of the mixed wine. To this the attendants resort with beautiful cups, fashioned like a lion's head, and having handles of twisted wire. These they dip in the vase, and then hurry away with full vessels to the guests, whose cups they replenish, and return for more. The hurrying to and fro with the wine cups is clearly expressed. The cups used by the guests were beakers of exactly the same form, but rather smaller, and without handles.

The sculptures do not afford us much information as to what kinds of animal food were chiefly eaten by the Assyrians. In some scenes soldiers are represented after battle cutting up with their swords some sheep, and what appears to be a gazelle; and no doubt the animals killed in the chase were also used for food, but no swine are seen in the bas-reliefs, though these were kept and eaten by the early Greeks and Egyptians. Fish must have been eaten, for the art of catching them is described in one scene, where a man stands in the shallows of a little circular lake, with a river issuing from it. He holds with both hands a short line, to which a large fish has just attached itself. A rush basket full of fishes is strapped across his shoulders.

The mode in which the meat was dressed is not clearly described. The common mode of preparation in ancient times was that of cutting off slices from the

divided joints, and transfixing them with wooden spits. In one instance, in the Assyrian sculptures, a man is seen cutting off a slice from a joint with a knife or dagger. For more delicate operations, a small fire of coals was made in a portable brazier, an example of which is seen in a tent. A man is seated on a low stool before the brazier, waving a fan over it with one hand, while with the other he grinds down a small round object like a nut upon the top of a vessel of singular shape. Fans for increasing the vehemence of the fire were in frequent use. Such a portable fireplace probably was that into which Jehoiakim, King of Judah, profanely cast the warning writings of the prophet Jeremiah. In the English translation of the Bible it is said, "Now, the king sat in the winter house in the ninth month, and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him, and it came to pass that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth." (Jeremiah xxxvi. 22, 23.) But in the original Hebrew we are told, not that the king *was* sitting before the fire on the hearth, but that the hearth "containing the fire was brought or set before the king."

We have no certain information as to the mode in which the Assyrians disposed of their dead. Tombs indeed have been found which contained human bones, together with vases and ornaments, but the latter are Egyptian, not Assyrian. The chief remains of sepulchres have been found about seventeen miles north of Mosul. There, in the surface of some cliffs, are carved eight small tablets, each containing the portrait of a king, and one very large tablet, with two kings apparently worshipping two priest-like figures, standing, the one on a lion, the other on a griffin. The large tablet, and one containing the figure of a bull, have chambers cut behind them. These chambers are supposed to have been royal tombs; and this peculiar

kind of burial is especially illustrated by the prophet Ezekiel, when, in his lamentation over the fallen glory of the great nations of the earth, he says, "Asshur is there, and all her company, his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword: whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living." (Ezekiel xxxii. 22, 23.)

Some reference has already been made to the arts and manufactures of the Assyrians, and to their knowledge of metals. The great abundance of gold and silver in ancient times is a remarkable fact resting on indisputable evidence. Both sacred and profane writers constantly refer to it. As early as the emigration of Abram we are told that the patriarch was very rich in cattle, in silver, and gold. (Genesis xiii. 2.) Herodotus mentions a statue of solid gold at Babylon, twelve cubits, or about eighteen feet, high; as also another large golden statue, a table and a throne, which together weighed 800 talents, or upwards of 40 tons. This brings to our mind the statue set up by Nebuchadnezzar, which was 60 cubits high (probably including the pedestal) and six cubits broad; and it is reasonable to suppose, from the intimate connection between Nineveh and Babylon, that gold was not less employed in the Assyrian than in the Babylonian metropolis. The Greek legends tell us that Sardauapalus placed on his funeral pile 150 golden couches and 150 golden tablets, besides vases and ornaments innumerable; and the prophet Nahum declares that "the spoil of silver and the spoil of gold were without end." (ii. 9.) The prevalence of cords, tassels and fringes in the court costume prove that the art of spinning was much cultivated. Tanning must have been well known, for leather must have been largely employed in Assyria for the harness, on which

it is evident, from the sculptures, that so much decoration was bestowed. Skin vessels for holding liquid are also frequently represented, some rude in form, but others elegantly shaped into bottles with long necks, and lips probably of metal or ivory. It can scarcely be doubted that leather, or some preparation of the skins of animals, was used for the purpose of writing. The sculptures shew that scribes were constantly employed to record every transaction of importance. They wrote upon a material which was rolled up, and sufficiently elastic to maintain the scroll-like form at the end. This could not have been the papyrus, common in many countries, for that was too brittle to be rolled. In carpentry and cabinet-making the Assyrians were in no respect inferior to the Egyptians, who were famous for both; and in another art, that of working in ivory, they were singularly successful. Some of these specimens of ivory carving have been preserved, or rather restored, in a very remarkable manner. The remains, when discovered, were so decomposed that they were ready to crumble into dust on being touched, and it was only by the most delicate handling that they could be disinterred from the ruins of Nineveh and packed for transmission to Europe. On their arrival in England, Professor Owen suggested that they should be soaked in a certain chemical preparation, and when this was done they became again hard and perfect ivory.

Bricks, as it is well known, were the chief materials of architecture, not only in the plain of Shinar, but in Assyria. Brick earth was everywhere abundant, and although stone could be procured from the neighbouring mountains, it would be at a considerable expense. These bricks were coarse, and the burning seems to have been slight; but they appear to have been made level by means of a bed of fine clay, on which was placed a layer of lime or plaster. This formed a surface that could be painted in bright

colours. Some bricks from Nimroud give the idea of having been enamelled, the colours having been laid on thickly when in a liquid state, and then exposed to the action of fire.

A few specimens of glass bear witness to the existence and excellence of this manufacture. A beautiful little glass vase, belonging to King Shalmaneser, whose name is inscribed upon it, is now in the British Museum. One small phial which was discovered, resembled the modern Venetian and Bohemian glass, but unfortunately it was broken before it could be carried away.

The practical knowledge of mechanics possessed by the Assyrians, must have been considerable. It is proved by the machines which they built, and the works which they accomplished. The construction of their forts, battering rams, and assault towers, shows their skill in military engineering; whilst the canals and aqueducts, which were common in Assyria, prove that the people were equally well acquainted with civil engineering. Scarcely any traces of artificial roads are left, though we cannot doubt that in Assyria, as in all the great Eastern empires, they were under the special care of the state. The expression, "the king's highway," is one of great antiquity. The Israelites, on leaving Egypt, petitioned for the liberty of passage by "the king's highway," through the land of Edom. Josephus tells us that Solomon laid a causeway of black stone, along the roads that led to Jerusalem. Great military roads were made by the Persians, portions of which still remain. But our knowledge of Assyrian roads is chiefly derived from a sculpture, illustrating the well-known verse in the prophecy of Isaiah. "Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Isaiah xl. 3.) In this representation of a highway, which belongs to the reign of Sennacherib, the pioneers are seen engaged with

their axes in cutting down the trees, for the passage of the army through the woods of a mountainous region; and, in another bas relief of the same date, a broad, straight road through the mountain forest is represented, and on this the cavalry are galloping in line, accompanied by the king himself, in the royal chariot.

The discovery of a vaulted chamber in the Nimroud mound, proves the knowledge possessed by the Assyrians of the true arch, whilst it is interesting on another account. This chamber, built of burnt brick, was about ten feet high, and the same in width. The sides of the bricks forming the arched roof and the walls, were almost vitrified, and had evidently been exposed to the action of very intense heat; in fact, the chamber had the appearance of a large furnace for making glass, or fusing metals.

Whatever was the use of this vault, it was in all probability identical in structure with that burning fiery furnace at Babylon, into which the three Jewish princes were cast, and which appears to have been an ordinary engine of capital punishment. It is worthy of remark, that Eastern traditions have preserved an account of Abram's having been cast into a furnace of fire at Nineveh, by the command of Nimrod.

The sculptures have preserved no representations of agricultural operations, and only one of any implement of husbandry—a plough. But it is well known that agriculture was carried on successfully, both in Assyria and Babylonia, which were very fertile countries. Fruit of various kinds was also cultivated. The vine and the palm are continually seen in the sculptures; from the latter were made bread, wine, and a kind of honey.

The commerce of Assyria must have been very great. But our ideas of it can only be obtained by reference to what is known of the commerce of other nations at the same period. One article of merchandise—tin—is inter-

esting to ourselves, as having been procured by the Phœnicians from the tin mines of Cornwall. By them, it would no doubt be conveyed to Assyria; and it is strange to think, that the alloy of tin in the bronze ornaments, now deposited in the British Museum, may possibly have been carried from England to Assyria three thousand years ago, now to be returned like a loan repaid. Nineveh, like Babylon, must have been the seat of a lucrative marine trade, for the city was built upon a mighty river, up which the merchandise of the south could be brought, without unloading, to the wharves. In 1830, the English steamer, *Euphrates*, ascended the Tigris as far as the mound of Nimroud, and was only stopped by a great dam of vast stones, hewn and squared, and united by cramps and iron, and so ancient that, even in the time of Alexander the Great, its object and purpose were not clearly known.

We have no evidence whether the Assyrians actually coined money from metals, but pieces of clay of a peculiar form have been discovered, which are proved to have served the same purpose. They vary from about three inches, to an inch square, and are shaped somewhat like thick cushion, the two surfaces being rounded, and coming to a blunt edge at the sides. Both surfaces are covered with an inscription, which, having been decyphered, has been found to be an order on the royal treasury, to pay the bearer a certain named weight of gold. These cakes of clay were, in fact, the Assyrian bank notes, worth nothing in themselves, but always convertible into cash when presented at the Imperial Treasury. Engraved cylinders, often of precious stones, were used for seals. They varied much in size, but, generally, they may be described as from three-quarters of an inch, to two inches long, and about the same in circumference. The obscurity of a passage in the Book of Job, in which light is said "to be turned as clay to the seal" (xxxviii. 14), has been supposed

to be cleared up by a reference to these cylinders. In the use of such a seal on a flattened piece of clay, the latter bends up, and partially envelopes the cylinder, like a garment, and to this, the daylight spreading itself over the earth is compared. Inscriptions in cuneiform characters have been found on some cylinders. Generally speaking, they consist of the name of the owner, with that of his father, and an epithet signifying the servant of such or such a god,—the divinity being named who was supposed to have presided over the wearer's birth, and to have taken him under his protection.

So much has been said about the Assyrian inscriptions, that it may be desirable to state, briefly, the circumstances which have led to their being decyphered. A few years ago, the language of Ancient Assyria, and of the neighbouring countries, Persia, Babylonia, Armenia, &c., lay enveloped in obscurity. Numerous inscriptions existed, but no one could read them. The best specimens were found amongst the bricks, taken from the ruins of Babylon. Almost every brick bore an inscription, in characters resembling a wedge, or the barbed head of an arrow, pointed in various directions, and differing in size. These characters received the name of cuneiform, or arrow-headed.

The same characters were engraved on the faces of the living rock, in many parts of Persia, and the adjacent countries. They were marked upon the seals and gems found amongst the remains of ancient cities, and when the Assyrian palaces were laid open, vast numbers of similar cuneiform inscriptions were discovered, painted upon bricks, and cut upon marble statues, and alabaster slabs.

From time to time efforts were made to decypher these characters. A certain group of letters, frequently repeated, on the walls of the Persian city, Persopolis, might, it was suggested, signify king. The names of the Persian

kings, as recorded by the Greek historians, gave the clue to one or two of the words preceding the title, and thus a few letters were determined with some certainty; and as different learned persons, studying different inscriptions, all came to the same conclusion, there seemed but little doubt upon the subject. The inquiry, thus begun, was continued in the same manner, and every year greater precision was arrived at. But a knowledge of the letters of a language does not involve a knowledge of the language itself. This discovery was made afterwards. It commenced with Persia. The oldest Persian language is called the Zend; and though only a few sacred books in that language have been preserved, they proved sufficient, with the aid of the Indian, Sanscrit, to enable Colonel Rawlinson to translate the inscriptions, the letters of which he had before mastered. The reading of the Persian inscriptions still, however, left those of other countries obscure, for not only were the languages different, but the cuneiform characters, though resembling each other in form, being all arrow-headed, were differently combined, in different countries. A key to the difficulty was at length found by inscriptions, in three sets of characters, found in many parts of Persia; one being certainly Persian, the others a repetition of the same words in the Babylonian and Median languages. The object of what are called the trilingual inscriptions was, of course, originally to render their meaning intelligible to the different nations united under one government; but they have now served as a stepping stone to the understanding of the Assyrian and Babylonian languages. The Babylonian translations have afforded a list of about two hundred words, the meaning of which is known accurately, whilst the pronunciation can be fixed with tolerable certainty. These words are almost all found either precisely the same, or

subjected to some slight alteration, in Assyrian, and they usually afford a fairly correct notion of the general purport of the phrase in which they occur. By tracing the resemblance between other strange words, not found in the Babylonian inscriptions, and those of the languages belonging to the Semitic nations, or the nations descended from Shem, Colonel Rawlinson has been able to add about two hundred meanings with certainty, and about a hundred with probability, to the two hundred before mentioned. The vocabulary thus obtained amounts to five hundred words, or about one-fifth of the whole number which are estimated to exist in the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions. These words constitute all the most important words in the language, and are sufficient for the interpretation of the historical inscriptions.

The cuneiform was not, however, the only character employed in Assyria. As among ourselves, the letters used in writing with the pen are quite different from those which are printed in types or engraved on public monuments, so it was in the East. The cursive letters, as they are called, of the Assyrians, resemble those of other Semitic nations. They were written from right to left, the cuneiform from left to right. None have, as yet, been found on any of the earliest monuments, but a few fragments of pottery, and an alabaster vase, bearing the name of Shalmaneser, have been discovered inscribed with the cursive character. It is supposed that this was the ordinary character in which letters and books were written, whilst such records as demanded great durability and yet were required to be portable, were indented in the cuneiform character on tiles, bricks, or clay cylinders, which were then baked in the furnace. Great numbers of these clay cylinders have been found amongst the Assyrian ruins. One, which is now in the British Museum, and bears the name and lineage of Sennacherib, contains on

each side about sixty lines of writing, in characters so minute that the aid of a magnifying glass is necessary to discover their forms.

That pen writing, on some flexible material which might form a book, was practised by the Eastern nations from the earliest times is evident from Scripture. In the days of the Judges, a city in Canaan was called Kirjath-sepher,—the City of Books, or Letters. "They who handle the pen of the writer" are mentioned as a distinct class of persons in the time of Deborah (Judges v. 14); and Job expresses a wish that "his adversary had written a book," and declares that he would "bind it as a crown," (xxxl. 35, 36), an allusion which abundantly proves that the material must have been flexible.

It only remains to speak of the Assyrian mode of warfare, of which the discovered monuments give numerous delineations. In the earlier sculptures scarcely anything like an array of battle or order of march appears. The warriors are seen scattered promiscuously over the field, each apparently choosing his own station and mode of fighting. In the latter era disciplined troops are represented. The bow and arrow appears to have been the weapon on which the chief dependence was placed, but swords, spears and maces were also much used. The Assyrian defensive armour consisted of helmets, round bucklers, and targets, besides complete suits of mail. Cavalry in large bodies are represented on the walls of Kouyanjik; but the prominent object in the sieges and battle scenes of Assyria is the chariot, a small light box, nearly square, and open behind and at the top. These chariots could be borne by men, one man carrying the vehicle itself on his shoulders, while another held up the pole.

The Assyrian chariots of a later period were larger and heavier, but neither of them appears to have been used for actual purposes of war, but only as a means of con-

veyance. No seat was provided,—even the king himself being invariably represented as standing in his car. Two principal standards were affixed to the front of the chariots. This custom was peculiar to Asia. It was introduced into England by the Crusaders, in the reign of Stephen, and thus the elevation of the royal standard of Henry V. upon a car, at the battle of Agincourt, may be traced to a custom of the early Assyrians. Nothing is more remarkable in the sculptures than the gorgeous magnificence in which the chariot horses are arrayed, although the representations must give a very inadequate idea of the reality; the polished metals, the ornaments of stained and pure ivory, the necklaces, plumes, and coloured tassels, and the curiously wrought cloths of various dyes, all of which were deemed necessary for the full equipment of a war steed. The necklaces of gems, which hung around the necks of the animals, remind us of the present made to Gideon from the spoils of the Midianites, when, besides money, ornaments, collars and purple raiment, we are especially told that he received “the chains that were about their camels’ necks.” (Judges viii. 26.)

Besides the common weapons of war the Assyrians employed, in sieges, machines for the destruction of the walls of their opponents. These were, in general, structures similar to the battering rams of other nations, but some are represented as pointed and fashioned like a spear, their object being not so much to shake the wall, and cause it to fall by repeated shocks, as to penetrate the layers of bricks, and, by making holes in them, gradually to loosen the supports on which the battlements rested, and thus to overthrow them. Moveable towers were also much used. These were wheeled up to the walls, and from them the besiegers could discharge their missiles with greater advantage. In order to destroy the battering ram, or at any rate to impede its action, the garrison

within the city let down from the battlements strong chains, with which they caught the head of the engine. The besiegers, on the other hand, made use of grappling hooks, with which they seized the links of the chains, and by swinging with all their weight upon them, endeavoured to drag them out of the hands of their enemies.

When the Assyrians sat down before a fortified city, they formed a regular entrenched camp. A low wall of earth, burnt bricks, timber, stones, or whatever material could be most easily obtained, was erected round a circular space. It was pierced with loopholes, and furnished at regular intervals with turrets. A broad street ran from one point of the circumference to the other, and thus the camp was divided into two portions, one devoted to the king, the other to the officers and soldiers. The king's palace, a miniature representation of his permanent palace, was erected on one side of the central street. The royal throne accompanied the monarch on his expeditions, and on it he sat in the camp to give audience to his officers of state, or to receive the prisoners of distinction that were brought before him, and decide concerning their fate. The ministers of religion seem always to have attended the Assyrian kings on their warlike expeditions, and to have performed the appointed ceremonies of worship. Sometimes, it would seem, a pavilion, or tent, for the king was erected outside the camp. This was, probably, after the subjugation of the enemy was complete, and when no further danger was apprehended.

In conducting a siege, the first thing done was to construct embankments or causeways, on which the military engines could be wheeled up to the walls. These causeways appear to have been formed sometimes of brickwork, and at other times to have been merely heaps of earth and branches of trees encased with bricks. The king led

the attack in person, usually discharging his arrows from his war chariot, but occasionally alighting, leaving the vehicle in the care of the charioteers, and fighting himself on foot. These circumstances, proper to Assyrian sieges, are alluded to in the promise sent by God to Hezekiah, when Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem: "Thus saith the Lord concerning the King of Assyria. He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it." (2 Kings xix. 32.) If the ground permitted, scaling ladders were planted against the walls, up which, if we could believe the sculptures, the warriors mounted without any aid from their hands, and with as much facility as if they were walking up stairs. It was not the custom of the Ninevite artists to depict any mischance that befel their own side, and, amongst all the sculptures which have been discovered, there occurs no instance of an Assyrian soldier being slain, or even wounded, in battle. In close combat the warrior most commonly grasped his foe by the hair of his head, and then stabbed him. Such was the custom, also, among the Israelites. When twelve of the servants of David and twelve of the followers of Ishbosheth fought, "they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side. So they fell down together." (2 Sam. ii. 16.) The slain were generally beheaded, for the head was the great trophy of battle. This was a custom universal in the East, and frequent reference is made to it in the Bible. One instance especially is mentioned, when Jehu sent for the heads of Ahab's sons, and they were laid in two heaps at the entering in of the gate. (2 Kings x. 8.)

The punishments of the Assyrians were very cruel. The terrible death of impalement was inflicted by the conquer-

ors in all ages of their empire, though it does not appear to have been frequent. Perhaps it was mostly reserved for the leaders of rebellion. Two other punishments—named only because they illustrate passages of Scripture—are described in one of the sculptures at Khorsabad. Two prisoners, apparently of high rank, are being dragged into the presence of the king by means of a line attached to a ring or hook, which has been passed through the lower lip, and, it would seem, through the *jaw* of each captive. They are both blindfolded. Another captive is kneeling in front of these two, and, although the sculpture is too much defaced to give an accurate idea of him, yet the repetition of the same scene in another hall of the palace supplies the particulars. He also, like his companions, has the ring in his jaw, the king retains the line attached to it, and in his right hand holds his uplifted spear, and, with the utmost calmness, deprives his prisoner of sight, the point of the spear being in the act of entering the eye of the wretched victim.

The practice of dragging a prisoner by hooks is especially alluded to in the prophecies concerning Sennacherib, as well as in other parts of Scripture. The Assyrian monarch himself is thus threatened: "Because thy rage against Me, and thy tumult is come up into Mine Ears, therefore I will put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou comest." (2 Kings xix. 28.) The horrible act of blinding recalls at once the fate of the unhappy Zedekiah: "They brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon," and he "put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon." (Jeremiah xxxix. 5-7.) In the Second Book of Kings we are told that the chains were fetters of brass, and this also agrees with the records of the As-

syrian sculptures, in which are frequently represented lines of captives bound with heavy manacles upon the hands and feet.

Flaying alive is a punishment occurring in a Khorsabad sculpture. In England this fate was formerly reserved for persons guilty of sacrilege, the skin of the criminal being afterwards nailed to the church door. Portions of skin, to which tradition assigns such an origin, have been found at this day adhering to the doors.

The Assyrians were not a maritime people, and in the earlier monuments there are no representations of naval scenes, the vessels depicted being only those used on rivers. These boats are of the primitive form mentioned by Herodotus, who says, when describing those which he saw at Babylon: "The boats which come down the river to Babylon are circular, and made of skins. The frames, which are of willow, are cut in the country of the Armenians, above Assyria, and on these, which serve for hulls, a covering of skins is stretched outside, and thus the boats are made without either stem or stern, quite round, like a shield. They are then entirely filled with straw, and the cargo is put on board, after which they are suffered to float down the stream. They are managed by two men, who stand upright in them, each plying an oar, one pulling and the other pushing. Each vessel has a live ass on board—those of larger size have more than one. When they reach Babylon the cargo is landed and offered for sale, after which the men break up their boats, sell the straw and the frames, and, loading their asses with the skins, set off on their way back to Armenia. The current is too strong to allow a boat to return up stream, for which reason they make their boats of skins rather than of wood. On their return to Armenia they build fresh boats for the next voyage."

In one of the Nineveh sculptures the royal chariot is placed in a boat, and the king stands in it as if it had been on land, whilst his warriors cross the stream either by swimming, or on the inflated skins of beasts, a device still practised on most of the rivers of Asia. The horses, unharnessed, swim behind, being attached to the king's boat by ropes tied round the lower jaw.

In the later sculptures naval scenes are recorded, but the ships are those of foreign nations



CHAPTER VII.

RISE OF THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE—B. C. 747—561.

THE fall of Nineveh was as complete as it was sudden, so complete indeed that, but for the testimony of Scripture and of the late discoveries, we might be tempted to believe that the traditions of its greatness were the exaggerations of a credulous and uncivilised age. From the height of power it sank, not merely to degradation, but to nothingness. The very remembrance of the city may be said to have perished with it. Herodotus mentions it but once. Diodorus, the Greek historian, tells only of the extent and height of its walls. Centuries elapsed, and so entirely had Nineveh vanished from the face of the earth that the traveller, as he passed the mighty mounds beneath which the great city lay buried, gazed on them with the passing thought that perhaps beneath them might be discovered something which should throw light on the history of past ages, and then went on his way, forgetful that such a possibility had suggested itself.

And as Nineveh fell, so Babylon rose, with almost equal rapidity, and in a manner quite as astonishing. All that period, supposed to be 526 years, from B. C. 1273 to B. C. 747, during which what is called the upper dynasty of Assyrian monarchs ruled in Asia, is in the history of Babylonia for the most part a blank. Yet it cannot be said with truth that its condition was that of a mere subject kingdom, since we know, from an inscription left by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, that in the reign of Tig-

lath Pileser I. a king of Babylon invaded Assyria, and triumphantly carried away certain Assyrian gods to his own capital, and that it was in fact the stronger power of the two. Beyond this, however, we know nothing of the history of Babylon till the eighth century (B. C.), when a change took place in the government, the exact character of which it is difficult to determine, but which shows that some intimate association existed between the sovereigns of Assyria and Babylon. Iva-lush III. of Assyria (supposed, as it has been said before, to be identical with the Scripture Pul) was certainly connected with Babylon in some peculiar way, as he records that Babylon had been granted him by the gods. It is supposed that Semiramis, a Babylonian princess, was his wife, and that Pul reigned in her right; but, however this may be, the epoch is remarkable from the fact that the Babylonian astronomers chose this century as that from which to begin their calculations. The 2nd of February, 747 B. C., called the Era of Nabonassar, is a date continually met with in history. It marks the accession of a Babylonish king called Nabonassar, who certainly was in some way connected with Semiramis, and was even supposed to have been her son, but of whom little is known beyond the fact that he was an independent monarch, and reigned fourteen years. The short reigns of the four monarchs who succeeded him are, equally unknown to us; but the fifth, Merodach Baladan, is mentioned both in Scripture and in the Assyrian inscriptions. From the former we learn that at the beginning of his reign—probably about the time that Sargon, King of Assyria, was besieging Ashdod—Merodach Baladan sent ambassadors to Hezekiah, King of Judah, with letters and a present, the ostensible object of the embassy being to congratulate the Jewish king on his recovery from a dangerous illness, and to make inquiries concerning the

phenomenon of the alteration of the shadow on the dial, which, to a people devoted, as the Babylonians were, to the study of astronomy, must have been remarkably interesting. But a political purpose, not so openly avowed, was in all probability connected with this friendly embassy. Merodach Baladan, there is reason to suppose, was seeking the alliance of those nations who were likely to aid him in opposing the growing power of Assyria. Sargon was indeed becoming too mighty for the safety of the other kings of Asia, and Merodach Baladan had eventually an unfortunate experience of this fact. In the twelfth year of his reign, his dominions were invaded by the Assyrians; and unable to cope with his great enemy, Merodach Baladan found safety in flight and exile. Sargon's authority in Babylon was, however, by no means firmly settled. Towards the close of his reign, when age or infirmity must have weakened his power, the Babylonians rebelled. A period of anarchy followed, during which Merodach Baladan for a short period regained his throne; but the mighty Sennacherib, the successor of Sargon, again invaded Babylon, and from that time the Assyrian power became more or less dominant over Babylon, until Assyria itself fell. The few records of the period mention the names of various rulers, but whether they were all merely viceroys, or whether some may not have been native princes, ruling in their own right, is undetermined. All that is known certainly is the fact that about the year B. C. 680, Esar-haddon, King of Assyria, determined to govern Babylon himself, instead of placing his authority in the hands of a viceroy. Many records of his reign have been discovered, which indicate that he held his court, at least occasionally, at Babylon; and, as it has been before observed, it was to that city that Manasseh, King of Judah, the son of Hezekiah, was brought, and kept for some time a prisoner, being at length restored to his

kingdom. Esar-haddon appears to have been a little disturbed in his government of Babylon by the sons of Merodach Baladan ; but, having conquered and slain one, and received the submission of another, he seems to have found his government so secure that he was emboldened to resort to the practice of ruling the province by means of subject-kings, or viceroys. And this continued till the downfall of Assyria, which was then near at hand. The circumstances connected with that event have been previously related. The treachery of Nabopolassar, the governor of Babylon, who not only entered into an intimate alliance with Cyaxares, but sent a body of troops to aid in the siege of Nineveh, secured the independence of Babylon, together with an important share in the spoils of the mighty empire to whose destruction he had contributed. The northern and eastern portions of the Assyrian territory were annexed by the King of Media to his own dominions ; but the valley of the Euphrates, Syria, Phœnicia, Palestine, and perhaps a portion of Egypt, became subject to the King of Babylon.

Josiah, who was at this time the tributary sovereign of Judea, suffered the change of masters to take place without a struggle. It could have mattered little to him whether he paid tribute to the King of Assyria or of Babylon ; and he did not see, what was afterwards evident, that, as the dominions of the Babylonian monarch were now extended to the borders of Egypt, there was a probability of continued wars between the two countries, in which Palestine was likely greatly to suffer.

It is not improbable that, besides an increase of territory, Babylon gained at this time a great increase in its population. Nineveh, we know, was not only taken, but destroyed ; the bulk of the inhabitants would thus become prisoners ; and Nabopolassar appears to have availed himself of this supply to commence the various

works which his son Nebuchadnezzar afterwards completed. The reign of Nabopolassar lasted B. C. 625, twenty-one years. Little is known of the events by which it was distinguished. He is supposed to have sent his aid to Cynaxares in a war which took place between that monarch and the King of Lydia, and which was stopped by the awe occasioned by an eclipse; and on that occasion he is said to have acted as one of the mediators; but, in the uncertainty of the chronology of the period, it cannot be determined whether these events took place in his reign or in that of his son.

The circumstances connected with an Egyptian war, which seems to have commenced in the seventeenth year of Nabopolassar's reign, B. C. 609, can be fixed with greater precision. The Babylonian dominions were invaded by Necho, the son of Psammetichus. Josiah, King of Judah, moved by a chivalrous feeling of fidelity to his lord, the King of Babylon, went out against Necho with the small force which was all that he could raise. The King of Egypt was unwilling to carry on war against a subject-king, and sent to Josiah, urging him to withdraw his forces. The message of the ambassador was very remarkable, coming as it did from a heathen monarch: "What have I to do with thee, thou King of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; for God commanded me to make haste, forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not." (2 Chron. xxxv. 21.) Josiah, not believing the warning, persisted in his purpose. The opposing armies met at Megiddo, in Palestine. A battle took place, in which Josiah was killed, and Necho then pressed forward through Syria towards the Euphrates. These provinces submitted to him, and he returned triumphant to Egypt. On his way he passed through Jerusalem, and deposed

Jehoahaz, or Shallum, a younger son of Josiah whom the Jews had made king instead of his father, and carrying him to Egypt, gave the crown to Jehoachim, the elder brother.

Necho appears to have retained his conquests for three or four years, Nabopolassar being weak from age, and suffering from ill-health. At length, feeling his inability to conduct a war, the king of Babylon sent his son Nebuchadnezzar, at the head of a large army, against the Egyptians. The two hosts met at Carchemish, on the Euphrates, and in the battle which followed the Babylonian prince was completely victorious. Necho fled, and Nebuchadnezzar advanced through Palestine. Jehoiakim submitted, and was permitted to retain his throne. The whole country as far as the Nile was recovered to the empire of Babylon, and the King of Egypt, completely subdued, "came not again any more out of his land." (2 Kings xxiv. 7.)

The prophecies of Jeremiah connected with this great defeat of the Egyptians have already been mentioned in the history of Egypt.

CHAPTER VIII.

BABYLONIAN CONQUEST OF JUDAH—B. C. 604—586.

B. C. 604. **WHILST** Nebuchadnezzar was thus pursuing his conquests Nabopolassar died at Babylon. The intelligence of the event reached Nebuchadnezzar when he was either in Egypt or on the borders of that country, and having hastily made the necessary arrangements, he set out with all speed on his return to Babylon, taking the short route across the desert, probably by way of Tadmor or Palmyra. It would appear that he felt some anxiety regarding his succession to a kingdom composed of so many different elements; but his uneasiness was groundless, for the Chaldeans had kept the throne vacant for him. He was accompanied on his journey only by his light troops; the bulk of his army, and his numerous captives, Jews, Phœnicians, Syrians and Egyptians, arrived later, having followed the usual route. The captives were planted in various parts of Babylonia, and their numbers, added to the Assyrian prisoners, gave Nebuchadnezzar that unbounded command of men, able to labour, which enabled him to cover his whole territory with gigantic works, the remains of which excite admiration even at the present day.

—Vast, however, as was the power of the King of Babylon, his empire was too extensive to remain at peace. Soon after his departure from Syria both Judæa and Phœnicia rebelled, and Nebuchadnezzar, having called in the aid of Cyaxares, King of Media, led in person the

great army, comprised of the troops of the two nations, which marched to chastise the rebels. Tyre was first invaded, but it was too strong to be taken by assault. Nebuchadnezzar therefore left behind him a sufficient force to besiege it, and proceeded with the remainder of his army to Jerusalem. Jehoiakim, King of Judah, following the fatal example of so many of his predecessors, had rebelled, trusting to Egypt for help; but he rested upon a broken reed. The Egyptians, utterly subdued, were unable to render any assistance, and Jehoiakim had but to wait in proud helplessness the approach of the conqueror. Even then his unbelief and hardness of heart showed themselves openly. The prophet Jeremiah was commissioned to warn him and his people of the fate their sins had deserved, and to endeavour to awaken them to repentance. The message delivered to Jeremiah was transcribed in writing by Baruch, the scribe, and by him taken to the great princes and nobles of the kingdom. In much alarm, they urged that it should immediately be laid before the king, and bidding Baruch retire and hide himself, lest some evil should befall him in the probable outbreak of Jehoiakim's indignation, they proceeded to the winter palace. Jehoiakim received the intelligence of the prophet's boldness with what would appear to have been more curiosity than alarm. He ordered the warning roll to be brought to him, and one of the attendants was directed to read it aloud, whilst the princes stood near to listen. After hearing the contents of a few leaves, the king stopped the reading, and cutting the roll, with his penknife, cast it into the fire till it was consumed. Three of the princes endeavoured to interfere, but they were unheeded, and the king and the rest of his nobles watched unmoved the destruction of the Divine message. Jehoiakim, burning with wrath, and doubtless rendered desperate by the act he had just committed, gave orders

for the seizure and punishment of Jeremiah and Baruch ; but the Providence of God watched over them, and enabled them to conceal themselves. . The wilful king could not, however, escape the threatenings he had so much reason to dread. The prophecies were re-written, and Jeremiah was ordered to deliver to the king this fearful message : " Thus saith the LORD, Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein saying, The King of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast ? Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost ; and I will punish him and his seed for their iniquity ; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them ; but they hearkened not." (Jer. xxxvi. 31.) After a threat so terrible, Jehoiakim, proud and unbelieving though he was, must have awaited the advance of Nebuchadnezzar with great misgiving. As the Babylonian monarch drew near, his own powerlessness became more fully obvious, and submission was felt to be his only resource. But it was too late for mercy. He was only recognised as a prisoner. Nebuchadnezzar ordered him to be bound with chains, in preparation for being carried to Babylon, but death overtook him before this purpose could be carried out. The circumstances of his death are not mentioned in profane history, neither are they related in Scripture, except in the words of prophecy, which declare,—*" They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother ! or, Ah, sister ! They shall not lament for him saying, Ah, lord ! or, Ah, his glory ! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. (Jer. xxii. 18, 19.)*

Jeconiah, or, as he is called in the Book of Kings, Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, was now placed by Nebuchadnezzar on the throne of Judah, but his fidelity was soon suspected. With the Jewish kings, treachery to a human lord seems to have gone hand in hand with rebellion against the Almighty. For again the words of the prophet resounded in Jerusalem, foretelling the coming woe.

"As I live saith the LORD, though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence. And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born, and there shall ye die. But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.

"Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

"O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD!

"Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." (Jeremiah xxii. 24—30.)

The prophecy was speedily fulfilled; for the reign of Jeconiah lasted but a very few months. His treachery being discovered, Nebuchadnezzar sent an army to besiege Jerusalem. The king was taken prisoner, and carried to Babylon, together with "the goodly vessels of the House of the LORD;" and Zedekiah, his brother, was made "King over Judah and Jerusalem." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 10.)

The character of this prince is as remarkable for its weakness, as that of his predecessors was for profanity ; but the events of his reign were little more than a repetition of theirs. Freedom from the yoke of the King of Babylon was his first object, to be obtained at any price, and Apries, or Pharaoh Hophra, King of Egypt, a prince of an enterprising and ambitious character, was entreated to lend his aid for this purpose.

The application was favourably received, but the usual result followed. The Egyptians were slow in their succour, Nebuchadnezzar was rapid in his vengeance. He had reached Jerusalem, and formally invested it, before Apries had advanced to its relief. When, at length, tidings reached him that the Egyptian troops were on their march, he raised the siege, and departed to encounter the more powerful enemy. Zedekiah, who must have watched anxiously for the result of the meeting between the two armies, was not kept long in suspense. A Divine message, sent by the Prophet Jeremiah, foretold that he was to expect no effectual aid from the ally, against whom the Jews had been so often, and so vainly warned, but that the final destruction of the kingdom, at the hands of the Chaldeans, was near at hand.

“Then came the word of the Lord unto the Prophet Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, thus shall ye say to the King of Judah, that sent you unto Me to enquire of Me. Behold Pharaoh’s army which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire. Thus saith the Lord ; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us, for they shall not depart. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they

rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire." (Jeremiah xxvii. 6—10.)

The prophet who received this message was the first to show his belief in the truth of his own predictions. He endeavoured to escape from Jerusalem, but, being discovered, was brought back to the city, and thrown into prison, by the command of some of the Jewish princes, on a charge of falling away to the Babylonians. The king appears to have taken a different view of the conduct of Jeremiah; and, recognising his mission as a prophet, he sent for him secretly, heard from his own lips the threatenings which he had been appointed to deliver, and then, afraid to acknowledge fully his conviction of Jeremiah's truth, allowed him to be taken back to the court of the prison, where he would have a certain degree of freedom, and ordered that food should be provided for him, as long as any remained in the city.

The weakness and indecision which Zedekiah then exhibited, were grievously increased by after-circumstances. The Egyptians, afraid to encounter the army of Nebuchadnezzar, either withdrew at his approach, or were compelled to do so after being defeated; and the King of Babylon, relieved from any apprehension he might have entertained on that score, was able to direct his full force against Jerusalem.

The predictions of Jeremiah were now fully known, together, with the advice which, by the command of God, he did not hesitate to give, that the people, instead of attempting to resist the Chaldeans, should at once submit to them. The princes of Judah became clamorous for his death, urging that by his prophecies he destroyed the spirit of the soldiers. Zedekiah consented, though with a protest, containing a lamentable confession of his own weakness. "Behold, he is in your hand; for the king is not he that can do anything against you." (Jere-

minah xxxviii. 5.) Jeremiah was thrown into a miserable dungeon, and his life would inevitably have been sacrificed but for secret orders given by the king for his release. Another private interview took place between the prophet and his sovereign, when the unhappy Zedekiah, desperate in his anxiety and his fears, after taking a solemn oath that, whatever might be the predictions and the advice given by Jeremiah, he should not be put to death, received the last counsel sent him from God—counsel which he was too cowardly and too faithless to profit by:—

"Thus saith the LORD, the God of Hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the King of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live and thine house. But if thou wilt not go forth to the King of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand." (Jeremiah xxxviii. 17, 18.)

Zedekiah's reply was that of a man sunk to the depths of humiliation by the timidity and indecision of his disposition. He did not distrust the message, he did not profess to fear the tortures of his enemies, but he shrank from the taunts of the Jews who had fallen away to the Chaldeans and who, he believed, would mock at his downfall. Such a fear could best be answered by bringing forward the dread of a like danger on the other side. The prophet repeated his advice, entreating the king to listen to it, and warning him that if he should refuse to obey it, even his own wives,—the women left in his house,—would upbraid him with his folly, and reproach him with the blind trust which he had placed in the friends and supporters, who had failed him in the hour of his need. Zedekiah could determine nothing. He could but send

back Jeremiah to the court of the prison; whilst his thoughts turned from the terrible, but, as yet, future evil which awaited him, to the fear lest the Jewish princes should know that he had ventured, unknown to them, to hold any communication with the prophet. So the days of indecision passed on. The Jews continued their weak defence, the Babylonians their fierce assault, and at length, on the ninth day of the fourth month, B. C. 586, a breach was made in the walls, and the princes of the King of Babylon entered the city, and took possession.

Zedekiah waited even till that last moment before his determination was made. Unable to take the step which had been put before him as a duty, he trusted to the necessity of circumstances for guidance; and when he had actually seen the princes of Babylon in possession of his city, he and all the men of war fled, and went out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden. Doubtless, it was then too late to throw himself upon the mercy of his conqueror. Long opposition had irritated Nebuchadnezzar, and the Babylonians, to a severe vengeance. The Chaldean army pursued after the unhappy king to the plains of Jericho; and when at length they overtook him, he was carried as a prisoner to Nebuchadnezzar, who was not then with his forces, but at Riblah, in the land of Hamath.

There, whilst Zedekiah stood by to witness the cruel act, Nebuchadnezzar slew his two sons, and ordered the execution of all the nobles of Judah; and adding bodily torture, and the lingering wretchedness of years, to the crushing sorrow which had already befallen the miserable Jewish monarch, he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon.

The fate of the captured city was as terrible as that of its sovereign. Its inhabitants had "mocked the messages of God, and despised His words, and misused His pro-

phets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age. He gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the House of God, great and small, and the treasures of the House of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the House of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon, where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16—20.)



CHAPTER IX.

THE BUILDING OF THE CITY OF BABYLON—B. C. 586—561.

THE siege of Tyre had continued whilst all these events were taking place in Judea. Thirteen years indeed went by, after the city was first invested, before it was finally subdued, but this determined defence must have only served to strengthen the purpose of Nebuchadnezzar. Tyre was at that time one of the most renowned cities in the world. It is said to have been founded by a colony from Sidon 240 years before the building of Solomon's Temple. The original city was built upon the mainland, but in the time of Nebuchadnezzar Tyre had spread itself over an island about a mile in length, and distant half a mile from the shore. Its situation was the source of its prosperity, and to have confessed himself vanquished by the difficulties encountered in the siege would have been a humiliation too great to be endured by the haughty King of Babylon.

He must have imagined also that the spoils of the city were likely to repay any expense which might be incurred in taking it; for Tyre was the capital of Phœnicia, and Phœnicia was the centre of the wealth and commerce of the world then known. The prophet Ezekiel tells of the beauty of the Tyrian vessels, with their masts of cedar, their oars of oak, and their benches of ivory. He speaks of the silver, iron, tin and lead, and brass; the spices, wheat, honey, oil and balm; the lambs, goats, rams and horses, together with the slaves; all of which were brought to the fairs and markets of the merchant city. He mentions

the traffic in gold and precious stones, in emeralds, coral and agate; the ornamental articles, the purple dye, the brodered work and fine linen, and precious clothes for chariots, and the cedar chests of rich apparel. He says that the wares of Tyre "went forth out of the seas and filled many people, and that the kings of the earth were enriched with the multitude of her riches and her merchandise" (xvii. 33); and then, as though unable to describe the wealth and greatness of the city by any earthly comparison, he addresses the Tyrian monarch in these words of mingled admiration and warning: "Thus saith the Lord God, Thou sealest up the sun, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx and the jasper, the sapphiro, the emerald and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou was created. . . . Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned. . . . Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee. It shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." (Ezek. xxviii. 13, 15, 16, 18, 19.)

Such was the greatness of the city against which Nebuchadnezzar, directed by the Providence of God, turned his arms; but his stern patience, unwearied though it proved, was not destined to be rewarded to the extent which he might have anticipated. After the thirteen years' siege, Tyre was indeed taken, but the spoils of the city seem to have been insufficient to recompense him for the efforts

which had been made. Ezekiel especially mentions that although "every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled, yet had he (Nebuchadnezzar) no wages, nor his army, for Tyre, for the service that he had served against it." (xxix. 18.) It would appear that Tyre on the mainland, commonly called Old Tyre, was destroyed, whilst the island Tyre escaped its fate for a time, but only to be again besieged and overthrown by Alexander the Great.

B. C. 585. Tyre was probably taken in the year B. C. 585, and a brief interval of repose from war followed. But, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar once more led an army against Egypt, it is supposed in consequence of some attack made by Apries. The open country was ravaged, and many of the towns were taken. Apries probably fled into some stronghold; but it does not appear that Nebuchadnezzar made any permanent conquest of Egypt, but rather contented himself with despoiling the country, and securing his dominions in that quarter from any future attack.

The remainder of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, a period of about eighteen years, is not distinguished by any known event of historical importance, but it is very interesting from the facts of a more private nature related in Scripture. The chief attention of the Babylonian monarch appears to have been given to the improvement, or indeed to what may be called the rebuilding, of his capital. The accounts handed down to us by various writers, and the bricks found at Babylon, and which all bear the name of Nebuchadnezzar, alike testify to the fact that it was this monarch to whom the Babylonians were indebted for the magnificent works which made their city one of the wonders of the world. The probable employment of the Assyrian captives has already been mentioned. The Jews would also, in a similar manner, have aided greatly in carrying out the king's projects. That Nebuchadnezzar's government was humane appears likely

when we consider the treatment of the Jewish princes—Daniel and his companions,—who, being of the royal tribe, were lodged in the king's own palace, fed from his own table, and, by his special command, instructed in the language and the learning of the Chaldeans. Idolater though Nebuchadnezzar was, yet his idolatry, like his pride, would appear to be more the natural result of the circumstances under which he was brought up, and the position in which he was placed, than the wilful turning away from the reception of higher truth. He set up a golden image on the plains of Dura, and made a decree that the nations of the earth should worship it, and when the command was issued he no doubt felt that he was lord over the minds as well as the bodies of his subjects, and could compel them, however differing in their creeds, to adopt one form of public worship, but he was not totally blinded by pride and prejudice. On a former occasion he had acknowledged the wonderful power of the God of Daniel, when a forgotten dream was recalled and explained by the young Jewish prince; and now, when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to obey his decree, and, being sentenced to be burnt alive, were saved by the miraculous interposition of God, Nebuchadnezzar was the first to own the power of the God of the Jews, and to acknowledge Him to be, if not the One only LORD of all, yet superior to all other gods.

This acknowledgment was, however, very far from the confession of the king's own nothingness which God required, and a stern lesson was in store for him. The grandeur of Babylon was the great source of his pride, and certainly, if ever any monarch had reason to glory in the strength and magnificence of his capital, it was Nebuchadnezzar. The fortifications consisted of a wall enclosing a space of above 130 square miles, five or six times the extent of London. This wall, if we may believe the

statements of eye-witnesses, was between 300 and 400 feet high, and above 80 feet broad. In its whole extent it contained nearly twice as many yards of solid masonry as the great wall of China, which, in 1823 A. D., was estimated to contain more material than all the buildings of the British empire put together. Within was a second wall, somewhat less strong, but almost as thick; and this wall Nebuchadnezzar appears to have intended entirely as a defence for his inner city, which was about five English miles in circumference. The outer wall, which, according to the old traditions of the country, had been built soon after the flood, he only repaired and renovated. The Euphrates ran through the city, and Nebuchadnezzar built his new wall so that the space which it enclosed should be divided by the river into two nearly equal parts. Before this time the city lay wholly on the east bank. When Nebuchadnezzar's new wall was begun, a trench was dug outside of the line marked out for the wall, and the clay taken from it was laid in heaps until a sufficient quantity had been obtained to make the requisite number of large square bricks. The trench was then fenced with brick-work, and filled with water, so that it formed a moat all round the wall, the only interruption being the passages across to the gates. The plan of a drawbridge was then unknown. Bricks of a common sort, formed partly of heated bitumen, and baked in the sun, were used for the interior of the wall, but the bricks on the outside were burnt in a kiln. They were cemented together so firmly that it was almost impossible to separate them, and were beautifully worked, and covered with curious inscriptions.

On the top of the walls, and at regular intervals, there were double watch-towers, rising to the height of ten or fifteen feet. These fronted each other, and a chariot and four horses could pass between them. A hundred gates,

constructed of massive brass, were placed at equal distances round the wall. They are especially mentioned in Isaiah's prophecy against Babylon, where it is said, "I will break in pieces the gates of brass." (xlv. 2.)

The western division of the city, which was the new, and what may be called the fashionable part, was laid out in streets 150 feet wide, crossing each other, and thus forming squares, around which, and facing outwards, were erected the public buildings and the mansions of the principal inhabitants, many of them several stories in height, and with walls polished or glazed, and adorned with sculptured figures and inscriptions. The open spaces behind the houses were laid out in fields and gardens, so that enough food could be grown within the city to sustain the inhabitants in the event of a siege. The streets parallel with the river were fifteen miles in length; but in the contrary direction, where the river intersected them, they were much shorter, for there was only one bridge across the river, which connected the two central streets.

The old town, on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, had been built at intervals, and upon no regular plan; and we cannot suppose, therefore, that on that side the streets were equally handsome.

When Nebuchadnezzar began his improvements, there was a palace on the eastern bank of the river, with gardens, and a park four miles in circumference; but, not contented with this, he erected another palace on the western bank, and, indeed, connected with the eastern palace by the bridge. The enclosure was eight miles in circumference, and was surrounded by a triple wall. The actual building is said to have been completed in fifteen days. In this new palace he constructed gardens the fame of which has been handed down through all ages. His object was to please his wife Amytis, the daughter of Cyaxares, who

was weary of the boundless plains of Babylonia, and sighed after the forests and mountains of her own land of Media. That she might have an elevated spot where both recreation and repose might be enjoyed, Nebuchadnezzar constructed a garden which covered a square of sixteen hundred feet in circumference, and consisted of sloping terraces, rising one above another, till the height equalled that of the walls of the city. The ascent from terrace to terrace was by stairs ten feet wide. The whole pile was sustained by vast arches, the spaces between which were formed into magnificent apartments, commanding a beautiful view. Great precautions were taken to prevent these rooms being injured by the water used for the gardens above them. A bed of flat stones, sixteen feet long and four broad, was laid over the arches, and upon this rested a quantity of reeds mixed with bitumen. Two rows of bricks, closely cemented, were placed over the reeds, and the whole was covered with thick sheets of lead. Mould, to form the garden, was then laid upon the lead, to a depth sufficient to allow of the growth of forest trees, as well as shrubs. The garden was watered by means of a hydraulic engine connected with the river.

Another of the wonders of Babylon was the Temple of Belus, which, if not actually rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar, was greatly beautified by him. It was a tower, dedicated to the worship of Bel or Baal, as also to that of several other deities. It stood in the centre of the old city, raising its gigantic head high above every other building. The Greek writers say that the court which surrounded it was a mile in circumference, and they also declare that the base of the tower consisted of a mound or platform, of solid brickwork, 660 feet high, from which there rose, one above another in regular succession, seven turrets, lessening by degrees, the whole forming an elevation of 800, or perhaps 1000 feet. The ascent is supposed to

have been made by means of a winding staircase or inclined plane, on the outside, with a convenient resting-place midway. At the top, we are told, there was a large chapel, containing a magnificent couch, and a table of solid gold, but no image of a god, although there were some in the chapels in the lower part of the tower. The riches of the Temple of Belus, in statues, tables, censers, cups, and other vessels necessary for the rites of religion, must have been immense. The description here given is, however, supposed to have been partly taken from another great temple restored by Nebuchadnezzar, at Borsippa, near Babylon, and which remained buried under a huge mound until explored by Sir Henry Rawlinson a few years back. The mound is called, by the Arabs, Birs Nimroud.

The remains of the Temple of Belus are supposed to exist in the form of an enormous pile of ruins, known as the Mound of Babel, the bricks belonging to which all bear the name of Nebuchadnezzar.

The following is the account given by Nebuchadnezzar himself, in his inscriptions, of his careful renovation of this temple at Borsippa :

“ Behold, now, the building named ‘The Stages of the Seven Spheres,’ which was the wonder of Borsippa, had been built by a former king. He had completed forty-two *ammas* (of the height), but he did not finish its head. From the lapse of time it had become ruined; they had not taken care of the exits of the waters, so the rain and wet had penetrated into the brickwork; the casing of burnt bricks had bulged out, and the terraces of crude brick lay scattered in heaps. (Then) Merodach, my great lord, inclined my heart to repair the building. I did not change its site, nor did I destroy its foundation platform; but in a fortunate month, and in an auspicious day, I undertook the rebuilding of the crude brick ter-

ruins and the burnt brick casings of the temple. I strengthened its foundations, and I placed a titular record in the part that I had rebuilt. I set my hand to build it up and to finish its summit. As it had been in ancient times, so I built up its structure. As it had been in former days, thus I exalted its head. Nebo, the strengthener of his children, he who ministers to the gods, (P) and Merodach, the supporter of sovereignty, may they cause my work to be established for ever! May it last through the seven ages! May the stability of my throne and the antiquity of my empire, secure against strangers and triumphant over many foes, continue to the end of time.¹

But Nebuchadnezzar's buildings were not solely those connected with his religion. He constructed aqueducts, formed an immense reservoir of water, built quays and breakwaters along the shores of the Persian Gulf, and made huge embankments of solid masonry at various points of the Euphrates and the Tigris.

The scientific knowledge with which the Babylonians of that period appear to have been least acquainted, was that required for the building of a bridge. They understood the principle of the arch, but their architects, like those of Egypt, were unable to construct a span of sufficient width for a bridge. That which connected the old and new city at Babylon was begun by throwing blocks of stone across the bed of the river at suitable intervals; but as the bed of the Euphrates was formed of shifting clay, this was a plan attended with great labour and difficulty. Indeed, the bridge appears to have remained unfinished during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and when it was afterwards completed, it was found necessary, in order properly to lay the foundations, to turn the waters of the Euphrates for a time into an immense artificial

lake, made for that purpose. The plan now adopted, of driving piles into the bed of the river, and damming out the water around the pier of the bridge while the work is in progress, seems never to have occurred to the Babylonian architects.

The artificial lake was afterward made very useful for the purpose of watering the country; the Babylonians being as industrious in agriculture as they were skilful in war, and the soil being so well adapted for the growth of corn, that whereas in Great Britain an average crop of wheat is about twenty-fold, and a return of forty or fifty-fold is considered a matter of astonishment,—in the valley of the Euphrates, the harvest, we are told by Herodotus, never produced less than two hundred-fold, which sometimes rose to three hundred. The whole valley, about 18,000 square miles in extent, is covered with the remains of the mounds and canals which the Babylonians had constructed, mostly for the purposes of agriculture; and Nebuchadnezzar is said to have made one canal in particular, between 400 and 500 miles in length, which, besides serving the purpose of watering the country, was large enough to be navigated by ships.

All the works of this monarch were indeed on a gigantic scale, and the wonderful magnificence of the city of Babylon alone was sufficient to fill the mind of Nebuchadnezzar with feelings of self-complacency. The pride which he took in it is recorded in the lengthened inscriptions which have within a few years been decyphered, and in which he calls it "the city which is the delight of my eyes, and which I have glorified." But his haughty satisfaction received a check a year before its full punishment fell upon him. A singular dream, of a tree of astonishing height and beauty, which was suddenly cut down to the roots, so lingered in his mind that he sent for

the astrologers and soothsayers whom he was accustomed to consult, and commanded them to exercise their wisdom by interpreting it. Finding them unable to do so, he then applied to the Jewish prince, Daniel (or, as he was called in Babylon, Belteshazzar), who had on a previous and similar occasion exhibited supernatural knowledge. Daniel heard the dream, and remained for an hour in such evident distress and perplexity that Nebuchadnezzar, himself, endeavoured to give him courage to interpret it. "The king spake and said, Belteshazzar let not the dream or the interpretation thereof trouble thee." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. The tree that thou sawest, which grew and was strong, whose height reached unto the heavens, and the sight thereof to all the earth, whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowl of the heaven had their habitation, it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher, and an Holy One, coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down and destroy it, yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him. This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord, the king; that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven

times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

"All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon," (probably upon the terrace of the hanging garden overlooking the city), "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth there fell a voice from heaven saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar." (Daniel iv. 19—32.)

He was attacked by a form of madness, apparently of that kind called lycanthropy, in which human beings have the qualities of wild beasts. It is impossible to fix exactly either the commencement or the termination of this terrible disease; but we gather from Scripture that Nebuchadnezzar reigned for some years after his recovery. The account of his restoration is thus given in the king's own words: "And at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine

eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?

"At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

An inscription discovered amongst the ruins of Babylon, but which has as yet been only imperfectly decyphered, may, it is thought, have a reference to this striking event in Nebuchadnezzar's life.

"Four years (?) the seat of my kingdom in the city—which—did not rejoice my heart. In all my dominions I did not build a high place of power; the precious treasures of my kingdom I did not lay up. In Babylon, buildings for myself and for the honour of my kingdom I did not lay out. In the worship of Merodach, my lord, the joy of my heart (?) in Babylon, the city of his sovereignty and the seat of my empire, I did not sing his praises! and I did not furnish his altars (with victims), nor did I clear out the canals."

Not more than one or two words in this inscription are at all doubtful, and it is the only instance, in what are called the cuneiform inscriptions, of a king putting on record his own inaction.

It is remarkable that Nebuchadnezzar, in this and in other inscriptions, speaks of the god Merodach as being the especial object of his devotion. This agrees in a singular manner with the account given by Daniel when he says that Nebuchadnezzar carried the sacred vessels of the Temple into the land of Shinar, to the house of *his god*, and brought the vessels into the treasure house of *his god*. * (Daniel i. 2.)

* Rawlinson's Bampton Lectures.



CHAPTER X.

THE FALL OF BABYLON—B. C. 561—538.

AFTER a reign of forty-three years, the longest recorded of any Babylonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar died. He was succeeded by his son Evil Merodach. This monarch is represented by some writers as violent and intemperate, a character scarcely consistent with the fact that, in the first year of his reign, he released the unfortunate Jeconiah, King of Judah, from the prison in which he had passed seven and thirty years; and, besides treating him with great personal kindness, made an allowance for his daily provision during the remainder of his life.

Evil Merodach's reign was very short. After two years, he was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, or Nergal-sharazur, who took possession of the throne. It has been thought that this prince was the Nergal-sharazur who, nearly thirty years before, accompanied the army of Nebuchadnezzar to the last siege of Jerusalem, and who was evidently, at that time, one of the chief officers of the crown. (Jer. xxxix. 3.) The conjecture is the more probable from the fact, that the title of *Rab-Mag*, by which this officer is distinguished in the Book of Jeremiah, is found attached to the name of the Babylonian monarch in the brick inscriptions. He was probably advanced in years when he ascended the throne, for he reigned only three years and a half; but during that period, he must have seen the beginning of

a revolution amongst the states of Western Asia, which was in a short time to change the whole condition of the country, and which must, even at that early stage, have given the Babylonians cause to fear the terrible attack, that was finally their ruin.

The royal families of Babylon and Media had now for many years been united by ties of blood, as well as by the remembrance of the victory over Assyria, to which both had contributed. In former years there may have been a natural hostility between them, arising from differences of race and religion, for the Medians were an Arian people, and fire-worshippers,—the Babylonians, Semites, and adorers of Bel, or Jupiter, and Nebo, or Mercury; but mutual benefits, and a frequent interchange of good offices, had doubtless softened any such feelings of enmity, and the misfortunes of one state must, at this period, have been considered as a threatening of evil to the other. The tidings that Astyages, King of Media, had been dethroned by Cyrus, the Persian, and that the power of the conqueror was acknowledged from the deserts of Carmania to the banks of the river Haylys, must therefore have been looked upon by the Babylonians almost as a national calamity. The ties which had bound them in such close alliance with their neighbours, were now destroyed. The enemies of the Medes were too likely to be their enemies also, and Cyrus aiming, as it was evident he did, at universal dominion, might soon be expected to attack them.

B. C. 556. Neriglissar died before such forebodings were realised. Laborosoarchod, his son and successor, was a mere boy, and is said to have given signs of a vicious disposition. * He appears to have ascended the throne peaceably, but had reigned only nine months when a conspiracy was formed against him by his courtiers, who murdered him, and then selected Nabonadius, one of their number, a man of no great eminence previous, to fill the vacant throne.

B.C. 561. This event took place about the time when Cyrus commenced his war with Cræsus, King of Lydia. It was probably in the very first year of the reign of Nabonadius—called also Labynetus—that ambassadors from Cræsus arrived at Babylon, to propose the formation of a grand confederacy against Cyrus, between Lydia, Egypt, and Babylon. Nabonadius willingly entered into this scheme, for he was, apparently, quite aware of his own danger, and had already begun to take measures for defence. In addition to the walls which already surrounded the city, others, scarcely inferior in strength, had been built on either side of the river. Gates of brass opened from these walls into the streets, which touched upon the river, so that, in fact, Babylon consisted of two cities, separately and completely fortified. Flights of steps led from the brazen gates to the river, for the convenience of the inhabitants, who passed from one side to the other in boats. These brazen gates, opening upon the river, were always open in the day time, and closed at night.

The defences which have been described, together with a contrivance for laying under water the whole tract of land to the north-west of the city, are ascribed by Herodotus, to Nitocris, a Babylonian Queen, supposed by some persons to be the wife, and by others, the mother of Evil Merodach. Her name is Egyptian, which may be explained by the probable marriage of some Babylonian prince, or noble, with an Egyptian captive. All that is told of Nitocris is, however, completely legendary; and it is certain that the river walls were, at least, begun by Nabonadius, as the bricks of which they were formed bear, one and all, his name.

Having taken what seemed the necessary precautions, the King of Babylon appears to have rested satisfied, in his supposed security; and probably awaited, without much fear, the expected attack of the Persians.

Two years had passed from the time that Nabonadius joined the league proposed by Cræsus, when another embassy arrived from Lydia bearing tidings, startling and alarming. Cræsus had ventured, single-handed, to oppose the Persian king. He had been defeated, and compelled to fall back upon Sardis, his capital. Nabonadius was requested to prepare an army, which should be ready against the Spring, and then to join the general rendezvous at Sardis, to which the King of Lydia had invited all his allies, with the intention of again making a vigorous attack upon Cyrus. Nabonadius, doubtless, intended to comply with this request, but the course of events was so rapid, that it was impossible for him to give any assistance to his confederate. Herald followed after herald, and each brought news more dismal than the last. Cyrus, it was said, had invaded Lydia, he had marched on Sardis, Cræsus had lost a battle, and was obliged to take refuge within the walls. The city was besieged by the Persians. And then, in extremity of distress, Nabonadius was entreated not to delay his succour till the time appointed, but to march to the aid of Cræsus with all possible speed. Only a fortnight afterwards when, probably, the troops were collected and ready to set out, it was too late. The citadel of Sardis had been surprised, the town was taken, and the empire of Cyrus extended over the kingdom of Lydia, and reached to the borders of the *Ægean Sea*.

After such tidings, Nabonadius doubtless set to work with fresh vigour at his defences; for it must have been impossible to foretell how soon the armies of the conqueror might be turned against him. Cyrus, however, had other objects to engage his attention for a time, and fifteen years elapsed before the dreaded day arrived, and the Persians appeared before the walls of Babylon.

During this period, every precaution which forethought and ingenuity could contrive, was taken to provide for the security of the city. The territory beyond was aban-

doned to its fate, for the country population might easily find shelter in the space enclosed by the great walls. Within these, a vast quantity of corn was laid up in store, but famine was not the enemy which the Babylonians had cause to fear. The extent of open ground, between the streets and houses, was so great, as easily to admit of crops being raised, which would be fully sufficient to support the inhabitants of the city. Reduction by blockade was therefore impracticable, and the Babylonians might well trust to the enormous height and thickness of the walls, as likely to baffle every attempt on the part of the besiegers to effect an entrance.

B. C. 538. It was in the Spring of the year n. c. 538 that Cyrus led his conquering army to the plains of Babylon, and Nabonadius, eager to decide whether it would be necessary to submit to a siege at all, went out to meet him. A battle was fought, and victory was on the side of the Persians. "The mighty men of Babylon" then "forebore to fight—they remained in their strongholds." (Jeremiah li. 30.) Nabonadius fled to Borsippa, a strong fortress, and one of the chief seats of Chaldee learning, but which could in no way compare with Babylon either for strength or magnificence. As his representative in the capital he left his son, whom he had a few years previously associated with himself in the government. This son, whose name in the Babylonian records is *Bil-shar-uzur*, was undoubtedly the king *Belshazzar* mentioned in the Book of Daniel. He is indeed there called the son of Nebuchadnezzar, but the title of son was, by the Jews, applied equally to the grandson, and it is evident that this was the actual relationship, from the prophecy in Jeremiah, which says that all nations shall serve Nebuchadnezzar, and his son, and his *son's son*, until the very time of his land (or its destruction) come. (Jer. xivii. 7.)

Belshazzar's mother was probably therefore the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and this supposition is somewhat confirmed by the fact that Nabonadius certainly had a son, to whom he gave the name of Nebuchadnezzar, showing that the appellation of the great king was considered to belong to the family of Nabonadius. Belshazzar, being thus left to enjoy the supreme power without control, neglected the duty of watching the enemy, whose progress in the siege was slow, and gave himself up to enjoyment. Making a great feast, which seems to have been connected with some religious rites, he ordered the gold and silver vessels which had been taken from the Temple at Jerusalem to be brought, that he and his nobles might use them for their drunken carousals, and as they drank they "praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood and of stone."

"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlesticks upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." (Dan. v. 4, 5.)

At that awful sight Belshazzar's countenance was changed, and an overpowering fear took possession of him and of his nobles. The wise men were summoned, but they could neither read the characters inscribed on the wall, nor make known to the king the interpretation. Confusion and perplexity filled the hearts of all, when the queen, who had been told of the marvel, repaired to the banqueting house. Her name is not mentioned in Scripture, neither are we informed whether she was the mother or the wife of Belshazzar. But the former supposition is singularly in accordance with the words that she spoke. The daughter of Nebuchadnezzar would be little likely to forget the supernatural knowledge which had been in former years displayed by Daniel in his interviews with the great king, and now, recalling them to the mind of

Belshazzar and his terrified nobles, she exclaimed, "O king live for ever! let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: there is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father, light, and understanding, and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him. . . . Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation." (Dan. v. 10—12.) The suggestion was received with approbation. Daniel was sent for, and Belshazzar entreated him to use his skill in interpreting the unknown writing, promising that if he would do so he should be "clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and should be the third ruler in the kingdom" (v. 16); thus offering him a rank only inferior to that held by Nabonadius and himself. Daniel's reply is characteristic of the noble simplicity of his disposition:—"Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known the interpretation thereof" (v. 17);—and then, giving utterance to perhaps the most solemn reproof which ever fell from the lips of man, he reminded the reckless monarch of the punishment which had befallen his grandfather for his pride, the "kingly throne" and the royal glory which had been exchanged for "dwellings with the wild asses, the food of oxen, and the cold dews of heaven;" and, contrasting the repentance of Nebuchadnezzar with the impiety of his grandson, he added, "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of Heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His House before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know, and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are

all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Then was the part of the hand sent from him, and this writing was written" (as it is believed, in the Samaritan letters, which the Babylonians could not understand), "Mene Tekel Upharsin, or Peres." The words signify number, weight and division; and thus were they interpreted by Daniel:—"Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Tekel; thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting. Peres; thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." (v. 22—28.)

The royal promise was kept. "They clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom." But the glory was but the passing glory of an hour, for "in that night was Belshazzar the King of the Chaldeans slain." (v. 29, 30.)

How so sudden a retribution should have fallen upon the profane monarch it will now be necessary to inquire. The army of Cyrus had been, up to this time, stationed before Babylon, without making any progress. The strength of the walls baffled all efforts, and the Babylonians laughed the Persians to scorn. In his perplexity Cyrus either formed himself, or received as a wise suggestion from another, a plan which he proceeded to put into execution. The reservoir which had been formed to draw off the waters of the Euphrates when the bridge was built, was at that time a marsh, but it might still be made useful, together with the canal which connected it with the river. Cyrus proposed to repeat the experiment which had been so successfully attempted on a former occasion, and, by lowering the water in the river, make it fordable. This work he superintended himself, employing in it the most unwarlike portion of his army. The bravest forces he placed in two divisions, one at the point where the river

entered the city, and the other at the point where it issued forth, with orders to march into the town by the bed of the stream as soon as the water should become sufficiently shallow. When these arrangements were made, Cyrus waited for the opportunity of a general festival, which was likely to engage the attention of the inhabitants, and then, by means of the canal, proceeded to turn the Euphrates from its natural bed. The water, by degrees, sank to such an extent that the river became fordable, and the Persian troops who had been left for the purpose waded through it. Had the Babylonians been apprised of their danger, they might even then have saved themselves, by closing the street gates, which opened upon the river, and mounting the walls along both sides of the stream, so as to take the enemy, as it were, in a trap; but they knew nothing of what was going on. Occupied in dancing and revelling, they only learnt their position when it was too late to save themselves; whilst, owing to the vast size of the city, the inhabitants of the central parts continued their festivities even long after the outer portions of the town were in the hands of the Persians.

The suddenness and greatness of this calamity can only be described by the words in which the Almighty himself foretold it. The prophecies of the fall of Babylon are indeed too numerous to admit of being all repeated, but those which give the details of the siege have a claim upon our fullest attention.

"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together, and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is His Name. He shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon." (Jer. l. 33, 34.)

"Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet

among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Asbchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars. Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion." (Jer. li. 27, 28.)

"Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings, *to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut.* I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron." (Isaiah xlv. 1, 2.)

"Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the LORD." (Jer. l. 14.) •

"The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed, they became as women: they have burned her dwelling-places, her bars are broken." (Jer. li. 30.)

"Go up O Elam! besiege O Media! all the sighings thereof have I made to cease. Therefore are my loins filled with pain; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth. I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it. My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me, the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me. Prepare the tables, watch in the watchtowers, eat, drink: arise ye princes and anoint the shield." (Isaiah xxi. 3, 4, 5.)

"I have *laid a snare for thee*, and thou art also taken O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD." (Jer. l. 24.)

"A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and

upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men. A sword is upon the lions and they shall bite; a sword is upon her mighty men and they shall be dismayed. . . . *A drought is upon her waters and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.*" (Jer. l. 35, 36—38.)

"I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King whose name is the LORD of Hosts." (Jer. li. 57.)

"One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the King of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted." (Jer. li. 31, 32.)

"The King of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble, anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail." "At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations." (Jer. l. 43—46.)

How the death of Belshazzar took place is not exactly recorded. In the confusion and darkness of that night of terror he was probably unrecognised by the Persian soldiers, who would have respected his rank if they had discovered it, and his deathblow must have been given by some unknown hand.

When the city was in the possession of the Persians, Cyrus gave orders that the fortifications should be ruined, and large breaches were probably broken in the walls, sufficient to render the place defenceless. The city itself was allowed to remain, and Darius, the Mede, was put in possession of the government. Many conjectures have been made with regard to this ruler. Some have supposed him to be identical with Astyages, King of Media, who had recently been conquered by Cyrus; others im-

gine him to have been the son of Astyages; but in the absence of definite records it is impossible to determine whether the governor of Babylon was a monarch known in profane history, or a person of whose existence we have no account except that given in Scripture. Cyrus himself proceeded to Borsippa, where Nabonadius still held out against him. The loss of his capital and his son had, however, subdued his spirit, and on the approach of the Persian monarch he surrendered himself. He was treated with the gentleness shown commonly by the Persians to those of royal dignity, and a residence and estates, forming a kind of principality, were assigned him in the province of Carmania.

From that period Babylon ceased to exist as an independent monarchy, though efforts from time to time were made to throw off the Persian yoke. It is possible that Nabonadius may have been implicated in one such attempt made in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, the successor of Cyrus. It has indeed been said by one writer that for this offence he was deprived of his possessions and compelled to quit Carmania, but another writer asserts that he ended his days in peace in the principality which had been bestowed upon him. It is certain that his name was made use of for rebellious purposes; twice in the reign of Darius a claimant to the Babylonian crown, came forward with this declaration: "I am Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonadius," and on each occasion the Babylonians were tempted to revolt, and were only reduced to submission by battles and sieges, followed by the further dismantling of the walls. Babylon is supposed, however, to have continued the second city in the Persian empire down to the time of the conquest of Alexander the Great, and the Persian court resided there for the larger portion of the year. Alexander seems to have been attracted by it far more than by any other city, and if he had lived to carry out his intentions, Babylon would have once more become

a metropolis, but his death broke up every thing like concentrated power. His dominions were divided amongst his generals. Seleucus, who obtained possession of Chaldaea, founded upon the banks of the Tigris a town, named *Seleucia*, which drew away the population from Babylon, and as the ancient capital rapidly declined, its very materials were gradually removed, and used in the construction of the rival city. The ordinary houses quickly disappeared, the walls were either used as quarries from which bricks might be taken for other buildings, or allowed to crumble into the moat from which they had risen. Only the most elevated of the public buildings remained, and even these at length suffered the same process of demolition.

The river also exerted a destructive influence on the ruins, especially on those lying on its right bank, and under these circumstances it can be a matter of little surprise that the remains of the vast city are now so inconsiderable. All which at present exist stand on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, and are inclosed within an irregular triangle, formed by two lines of ramparts and the river. The space within this triangle is about eight miles in extent, and contains three great masses of building; one a high pile of unbaked brick-work, called by the Arabs *Babel*, and supposed to be identical with the Tower of Belus, another, known as the *Kar*, or *Palace*, probably the new palace built by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and a lofty mound upon which stands a comparatively modern tomb.

Upon the western bank of the Euphrates are a few traces of ruins, but none of sufficient importance to give the impression of a palace. The *Birs Nimroud*, the gigantic mass of ruins which marks the site of *Nebuchadnezzar's* great Temple of *Borsippa*, is however to be seen at a considerable distance, rising from the surrounding plain, through which the Euphrates may be traced, winding

"her silent course towards the sea, till lost amid the extensive date groves which conceal from sight the little Arab town of Hillah."

Such is Babylon now. According to the description given by Mr. Layard, "Shapeless heaps of rubbish cover for many an acre the face of the land. The lofty banks of ancient canals fret the country like natural ranges of hills. Some have been long choked with sand, others still carry the waters of the river to distant villages and palm groves. On all sides, fragments of glass, marble, pottery and inscribed brick are mingled with that peculiar nitrous and blanched soil, which, bred from the remains of ancient habitations, checks or destroys vegetation, and renders the site of Babylon a naked and a hideous waste. Owls" (which are of a large grey kind, and often found in flocks of nearly a hundred,) "start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackall skulks through the long furrows." With this dreary picture we may compare the words of prophecy.

"Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

"But wild beasts of the Desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

"And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses; and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." (Isaiah xiii. 19—22.)

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